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The Pacific Journal of Theology

Journal of the South Pacific Association of Theological Schools (SPATS)

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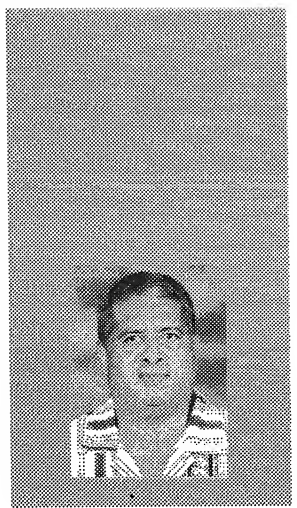
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Editorial

Ecumenism and World Council of Churches (WCC) have been criticized in several quarters for various reasons. However, the hope of “visible unity of the Church” is still the goal of ecumenism. The new Secretary General of the World Council of Churches, Samuel Kobia, give us his vision for this unity within the contemporary world given the various factors that make certain impact of this endeavour. He identifies these factors and their implications. It is in the attempt to deal with these factors that criticisms have been raised against WCC. However, if ecumenism is to be real in the life of people, it has to be relevant to where they are and thus the attempt to address the socio-political issues besides those that are “churchly” in particular. Kobia sees the ideal of biblical covenant as a way forward for the way we seek visible unity. The idea of the covenant brings out diversity and the dignity of such differences as well as personal relationship with God and others as key to surmounting the challenges of ecumenism at the beginning of this new century.

Theological education is a vital part of church life. Without it, the church will either fall into biblicism and fundamentalist extremism or it will find it difficult to meet



Dr. Kafoa Solomone

Dr. Kafoa Solomone is presently the Academic Dean and Co-ordinator of Higher Degrees at Pacific Theological College Suva, Fiji.

the challenges of contemporary life. Either situation is not healthy for living together in a society so diverse in its worldviews or does it help move the proclamation and promotion of religion as a guide to the ultimate meaning of life. Thus it is important that the quality of theological education must continue to be improved in order to fulfill its objectives.

Michael Gilligan in a keynote address earlier this year to the SPATS' biennial council held in Sia'toutai Theological College, Tonga, deals with ways and means of enhancing theological education. To ensure quality in theological programmes, Gilligan with his vast experience in accreditation work amongst North American theological schools, emphasizes "mutual accountability among peer institutions" and a "commitment of peers to the pursuit of excellence across their common enterprise." Today, quality control of theological education has shifted from whether or not a school had met the bottom-line requirements and the schools' stated objectives to the effectiveness of its products – that is, how effective is the outcome of theological training in the whole spectrum of life in church and society. In the end accreditation work is an ongoing process that is in the service of God's people.

The skills to identify, analyse, interpret, understand, live, and communicate the truths of the Christian gospel are at the heart of theological education. Those in the field of education are familiar with Bloom's taxonomy of learning skills. According to Paula Latu, there are three main categories here: cognitive, interactive and psychomotoric fields. Latu then proposes a fourth: the spiritual domain. Skills in this area are really to help not only the religious dimension of the person but also in the overall humanity of the person in matters concerning the origin and ultimate goal of life.

Jenni Carter discusses authority structure within the Anglican Church within Aotearoa. She makes a plea for a change in the way leadership is understood and practiced in the Church in New Zealand and Oceania

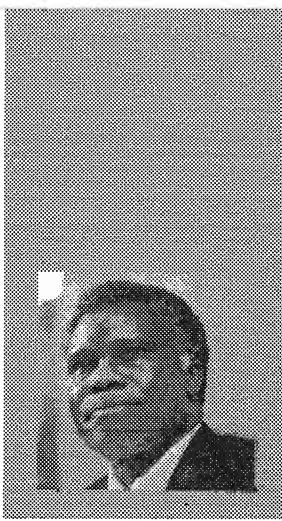


but which can be relevant in any contemporary church. She utilizes the metaphor “dancing in the waves” for an understanding of leadership in an ever changing and shifting contexts of contemporary world.

Jayachitra analyses the miserable conditions of women in the Indian society, especially the Dalit women, which are perpetuated by an androgenic interpretation in Christianity of hierarchical power relationship. She brings to bear on this issue a re-interpretation of relevant New Testament texts that prioritises the love of Christ among God’s people. That God takes possession of God’s people, there is no room here for a power based, man-centred relationship, or an attempt at domination of the other. Advocacy for mutual love relationship and not a woman-to-man love only as has been the paradigm in the subcontinent’s long held traditions.

Violence against women in an issue that the churches are now becoming aware of and they are working to deal with it through conscientising both the perpetrators (males) and the victims (females). To articles, by Alvin Gongora and Alice Akao deal with the issue from the contexts of South American and the Melanesian perspective, respectively.

As this is the last issue for this year, we all wish you a Merry Christmas and God’s bountiful blessing for 2005.



Dr. Samuel Kobia

Dr. Samuel Kobia was elected General Secretary of the World Council of Churches in August 2003, and took up his new post in January 2004. From 1999 to end-2002, he was the director of the WCC Cluster on "Issues and Themes", and in 2003 served as director and special representative for Africa of the WCC. Dr. Kobia is from Kenya, and is an ordained minister of the Methodist Church in Kenya.

God, in Your Grace, Transform the World The Churches' Witness for Life

*(Public Lecture at the Pacific Theological College
15 July 2004)*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

"Bula Vinaka" – this is how you welcome friends and strangers alike. I was glad to be greeted with these words when I arrived here in Fiji. This warm welcome is a wonderful expression of the extraordinary generous spirit of hospitality of you and your people in the Pacific.

Bula Vinaka – in my culture we say *Karibu sana*. *Karibu* literally means 'come closer and be part of us'. It has the same depth of cultural richness as *Bula Vinaka*.

When we greet each other this way, we underline the fact that we belong together as family, as relatives, as friends, sharing not only what we have, but sharing who we are. Some people say that there are old links between Fiji and Lake Tanganyika in Eastern Africa, my home region. So we might be relatives in very special ways. There was definitely more exchange, travel and trade between countries and islands in the zone of the trade winds than the colonizers wanted us to believe because history had to begin with their own presence – anything else was regarded as just uncertain memory and tales.



But the wise people in our communities have continued to tell their stories, helping us not to forget who we are, where we belong and what it means to live together as a community in the place that is our home. You call the land that is the people's identity, life and soul, *whenua*, *fenua*, *enua*, or *vanua* in some of your languages. We were taught that the land is not the private property of any one person, but a gracious gift that provides everything necessary for our lives. We were taught not to forget that our individual life is not our own, but we are part and parcel of a community that extends beyond us in space and time. Participating in the *kava* ceremony that you celebrate, I see myself entering into a covenant with you, your ancestors and your land in a deep and profound sense of faith. "I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am," is the way Prof. Mbiti sums up the African concept of identity. And that resonates very well with your own concept of a relational dimension of life.

I am extremely grateful to those leaders and theologians in our churches who have helped us to redeem our cultural heritage and identities, and to discover how the stories of the Bible are set in a similar worldview and experience such as ours. I very consciously say this at this place, the Pacific Theological College. If it is worldwide knowledge today that there is a contextual theology of the Pacific with its own distinct voice and its important contribution to the ecumenical church, it is, to a large extent, because of the committed work in recent decades of the faculty and the students of this school. I am glad to share with you that Faitala Talapusi represents this voice very well in our Ecumenical Institute in Bossey.

God's Gift of Life, a Gift of Grace

I summarize these thoughts in one simple sentence: "We are called to see our lives as a gift of our Creator – a gift of grace, not given to us individually but to be cherished and shared together."

Made in the image of God, we recognize the human dignity of the other; we affirm our mutual vulnerability and dependence on others,



the earth, and God. Christian faith believes that such interdependence of all life is an expression of love and reflects the relationship between God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit – the Holy Trinity.

When we recognize that our lives are gracious gifts of God, it becomes our mission in this world to care for life and the dignity of all. We are called to reconcile distorted relationships and heal wounds. Indeed, Jesus taught us that God is in solidarity with the marginalized. God has a compassionate desire for fullness of life and wants us to overcome the various faces of death among us.

Dear friends, sisters and brothers,

“God, in your grace, transform the world” – is the theme of the forthcoming Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 2006 in Porto Alegre/Brazil. Out of God’s grace we live. This conviction is at the basis of this prayer.

The call, “God, in your grace, transform the world” has its place in the prayer of intercession close to the end of worship. The community confronts itself with the realities of sin and death around it, with everything that needs redemption and healing. The members of the congregation prepare themselves to take part in God’s mission. Ready to take up their task, they call on God to transform this world according to God’s will. They trust

- that God continues to be the God of Life;
- that God continues to confront the powers of death;
- that God will transform the world marked by sin and death;
- that God will bring forth again the beautiful earth, the wonderful creation called ‘good’ by God without any reservation;
- that God continues to love this world in deep solidarity with life that is threatened by death and destruction and that we can trust God’s grace.

This gives us the courage and hope necessary to confront the reality surrounding us and to work for the transformation of this world according to God’s will.



Discern and Do the Will of God

“God, in your grace, transform the world.” - I find an excellent comment on this theme in St. Paul’s letter to the Romans, chapter 12, verses 1-2. Paul writes:

“I appeal to you...brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good, acceptable and perfect.”

God’s household of life is threatened in various ways by the powers and principalities of this world. Paul calls on the Christians in Rome, who live in the ‘belly of the beast’ of the Roman Empire, not to be conformed to the power structures of this world, but to discern and to do the will of God.

“Another World is Possible” – this motto of the World Social Forum that will meet again next year in Porto Alegre in Brazil, that same city that was chosen for the WCC Assembly – resonates well with both the Assembly theme and Paul’s thoughts. Live the hope that is within you! Become the children of God that you are called to be, do the will of God! Do not adjust yourself to the powers of this world, but transform yourself, renewing your minds in the spirit of the liberating message of the Gospel!

Such a message was as relevant to the people in Rome as it is relevant to us today. Many are in despair and have lost the hope that something can change, that they themselves can become agents of transformation for another world. They see a deep crisis of life. And they are right: the fragmentation of communities, the exclusion and impoverishment of the already poor and a merciless attack on creation that undermines the very basis of life are all consequences of the structures of sin. If the greedy life-style of the rich and affluent would

be globalised, three planet earths would not suffice. But there is only one earth, the one that God has made our common home.

Many feel numb, helpless and powerless in facing the massive misuse of unjustly distributed economic and political power, and the arrogant use of military force. Jesus speaks of Mammon and Empire when these powers force people and nature to conform to their own spirit and logic, when they sacrifice life in order to sustain themselves. In other words, they become idols. We have different experiences of this same reality in different places and social locations, but what they all have in common is that powers meant to serve life degenerate into structures of sin and death that imprison, torture and enslave people as if there was no alternative.

Indeed, the best way to analyse the present reality and read the signs of the times is to see the inter-connectedness of economic, political, military, social, cultural and religious power networks in an imperial structure. On my recent visits to member churches, I have seen the impact of this form of imperialism – the same is true also here in the Pacific, being the region

- that became the testing ground for nuclear bombs,
- that is marginalized in world trade,
- that has become a mission object for all kinds of churches at the expense of social cohesion and peace in community life,
- that has to struggle with a new disease like HIV/Aids, and
- that suffers first and foremost from the consequences of climate change.

An important part of my objective in coming to the Pacific so early in my term was to listen and hear the churches of the Pacific speak.

We Hear the Churches in the Pacific Speak

I am very grateful that the World Council of Churches could assist our member churches in the Pacific in their efforts to address this



situation. In coming closer to the churches in the Pacific in recent years, we have organized a series of consultations in response to the challenges you are confronted with. I want to acknowledge here Fei Tevi's tireless and energetic work to strengthen existing relationships and to build new bridges between the churches in the Pacific and the wider fellowship around the globe.

We hear the churches in the Pacific speak loudly and clearly

Let me mention four areas that are of special concern for our co-operation, where we heard your voice and we tried to respond:

1. the call for a nuclear-free Pacific;
2. the struggle against the negative impacts of economic globalization and the search for alternatives;
3. the action in solidarity with those already affected by the consequences of climate change; and
4. new efforts to fight the spread of HIV/AIDS.

1. Nuclear-Free Pacific

We hear your call for a nuclear-free Pacific and have supported it since Darlene Keju-Johnson addressed the Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1983 in Vancouver. This was definitely a very moving moment when she spoke about the plight of the people of the Kwajalein Atoll of the Marshall Islands; how cancer had conquered her own body and how afraid she was to give birth to a so-called "jelly-fish-baby" – all consequences of the exposure to nuclear radiation. Together with the Pacific Conference of Churches, the WCC documented the situation concerning the US testing at the Bikini Atoll, the British testing grounds of the Christmas Islands in Kiribati, and the French nuclear tests at the Moruroa, Fangataufa Atolls. Together with partners among the member churches and NGOs, we started common advocacy campaigns to stop the tests and to compensate the victims.

We can say, we were partly successful. The tests were stopped. Hearings took place, for instance, in the French Parliament in Paris. But

there are signs that some countries would like to resume their tests and we are still far away from a just compensation of the victims and former test-site workers. I want to assure you that the WCC is committed to continue this common journey.

2. Alternatives to Economic Globalization – the Island of Hope

I want to affirm very strongly the important contribution you made to the struggle for alternatives to economic globalization with the concept of the **Island of Hope**. I read in the flyer promoting it:

“No matter what island we come from, what language we speak, what color our skin, or what our cultural background is, we are united in our ‘Hope’ for the true realization of the Kingdom of God on earth. Though we are many islands, the hope which unites us makes us one Island of Hope.”

People all around the world know of the devastating consequences of economic globalization. The impact of international financial and trade policies on your region mirrors the impact on other places in the world. We know the actors and we know the ideology they want to impose on us.

The remarkable quality of the notion of the **Island of Hope**, however, is that you present an alternative which is rooted in the spirituality, family life, traditional economy and cultural values of this region where

“life is valued and celebrated in the *maneaba* (Kiribati), the *fale* (Samoa), the *kava* ceremony (Fiji and Tonga), the *bilum* and *Sam* celebrations (Papua New Guinea) and the nut celebration (Solomon Islands)”

all living examples of a community based life-style and ethos of sharing and caring, rather than greed, individualism and the accumulation



of wealth.

I must say, I was impressed by the following modest, but powerful words on the back of the flyer:

“The institutions and values embedded in the concept of the **Island of Hope** may not create wealth on a massive scale but they will never be responsible for creating second class citizens, destroying the environment at will, causing poverty, the debasement of humanity and the denial of human dignity, as economic globalization is doing.

The **Island of Hope** is a fitting expression of the global, ecumenical concept of the Kingdom of God in the Pacific context. The best of our traditional values are like seeds of the Kingdom of God which, as Christians, we can offer to the whole world.”

We want to make sure that this message is received in the other regions of the world and brought to the 2006 Assembly.

3. Climate Change and the *Otin Taa* Declaration

The same is true for the emphasis you place on climate change. You warn all of us, but especially the member churches in the rich industrialized countries, that you already suffer the consequences of climate change. People experience higher tides and stronger and more frequent storms. They see how shores are eroded and coral reefs are bleached. They are concerned with the level of salinity in their water supplies, and the threat to soil fertility by the intrusion of salt water into the water tables.

Scientists have shown that climate change is caused by the energy intensive life-style of the rich and affluent. As good prophets you denounce the evil, you make clear how all of us will be affected by it; and we also stretch out hands to act together in solidarity with you to

reduce the causes of human-induced climate change.

The *Otin Taai* (spoken *osin tai*) or *Sunrise Declaration* is again outspoken and strong regarding the root causes and the necessary action to be taken by the various actors at the various levels. It also includes a convincing affirmation of our common witness for life and our common belief in God's love of all creation.

4. The Fight against the Spread of HIV/AIDS

A fourth area of concern for our co-operation is the fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS. This disease is a threat to communities, but also a challenge to discover energies for mutual support and healing. We should admit that in many cases the initial response by many churches to this challenge was not helpful. Double standards and discrepancies between preaching and teaching on the one hand, and the realities of life on the other, were soon exposed.

It is one of the most promising experiences of recent years that ecumenical co-operation on HIV/AIDS is more efficient and absolutely necessary given the scale and character of the problem. It is also encouraging for an individual church to see how other churches have liberated themselves from counter-productive prejudices and found ways for a meaningful work on HIV/AIDS. They accompany the victims and care for the sick and the orphans, not by isolating them, but in mobilizing a strong sense of life in community that brings out the best traditions and values of our different cultures.

This is also a task in which institutions of theological education such as the PTC have an important role to play. You can contribute to the development of curricula and liturgies for the teaching and worship of the churches. Indeed, we need to reflect on the many ways churches nurture and shape the life of communities in order to strengthen their vitality and resilience.



To conclude, let me once again look at our calling to be.....

The Churches' Witness for Life

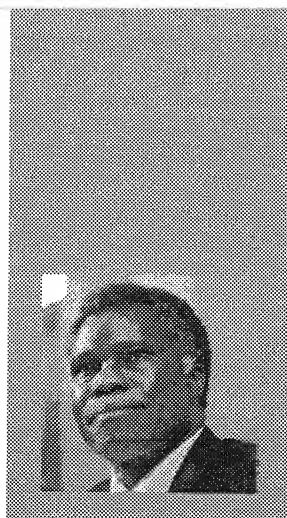
All four of these examples are good illustrations of the churches' witness for life that accompanies our prayer that God may transform the world through and in God's grace. The worship on Sunday and in our day-to-day lives belong together.

All the above issues require an ecumenical response. They need to be addressed at local levels, but in a common global effort. They all illustrate clearly how much we need each other, the church locally and the fellowship globally which is the World Council of Churches. I hope that you will share the stories and insights gained in all of these areas of your work at the 2006 Assembly.

All of these issues also challenge our understanding of mission and the identity of our individual churches. We cannot respond to these threats to life in continuing with 'business as usual'. We need to re-evaluate and re-energize our faith in the God of Life. I am happy to see that this process is underway in the churches of the Pacific region.

When we pray: "God, in your grace, transform the world," we know that this is at the same time a prayer that includes us. "God, in your grace, transform us also." Let us repent whenever we have conformed ourselves to the powers of this world, have not discerned the signs of the time, and have ceased to be the light and the salt that God called us to be.

I hope that the preparations for the forthcoming Assembly of the World Council of Churches will help all of us to renew our witness to life and our commitment to ecumenical co-operation.



Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia

*General Secretary of the
World Council of Churches*

The Future of Ecumenism

Introduction

Presidents and Moderators of Pacific Churches, the Catholic Bishops' Conference and staff members of the Pacific Conference of Churches, thank you for your very warm and inspiring welcome. I bring warm greetings from the member churches and staff of the World Council of Churches.

I am extremely grateful for your warm welcome, and I deeply appreciate the sentiments and the cultural and traditional significance of your welcoming ceremonies. This is the first time I am visiting the Pacific region and your continent – Fei Tevi constantly reminds us at WCC that the Pacific is indeed a liquid continent, comprising a sea of islands.

In this respect, I wish to acknowledge with respect

- the earth and sea that belong to many generations gone, and the generations present and those still to come,
- the land upon which I travelled and upon which I stand, and
- the earth upon which generations of people, past and present, have travelled and stood before me.



I acknowledge the spirit of your land and the sea from which sustenance and nourishment have been gifts to you for many centuries. I am indeed humbled by your welcome.

Brothers and Sisters, these words are not sufficient expression of the deep gratitude and appreciation for the elaborate welcome, but they come from the depth of my heart, and please accept the spirit in which I utter them: Asante

At the outset, I wish to state that the basis of my sharing with you this morning is to put forward a supposition.

My supposition is that the future of ecumenism depends on our recognition that there is dignity in diversity and difference. The biggest challenge to us all is how we see, define and make that diversity and unity visible in expressions of faith.

Diversity and Unity

The drive to make “visible the unity of the Church,” while biblically inspired, was given greater impetus after the World Wars in the first half of the last century when nation states, mostly in Europe and North America, came together to form the League of Nations and later the United Nations. During this period many countries became independent, most in a peaceful way (for example some countries in the Pacific), and some through violent conflict and tragic loss of life, not least of all my own country, Kenya, where close to 200,000 died in the Mau Mau war to liberate my country. One such recent example is East Timor. Other island nations such as Kanaky/New Caledonia and Maohi/French Polynesia are still to achieve self-determination. This remains a huge challenge to many of you who care deeply about your region.

The ecumenical movement, against the backdrop of gross violation of human dignity and atrocities committed during the War, and in parallel with the establishment of the United Nations, moved to put greater emphasis on the churches’ “visible unity” in the form of

both an institutional expression, and in addressing societal issues that matter to its members. Since that time, the gains and benefits to the ecumenical family are immense. Advanced relationships among the Christian churches

- foster understanding and appreciation of confessional faith issues,
- recognise the legitimacy of other faith beliefs,
- affirm cultural and traditional heritages of indigenous people,
- express willingness to allow space for local theologies to develop.

These are significant gains in our common ecumenical journey.

Global Trends

However, since the latter part of the last century, significant changes and configurations in economics and international politics have had a significant impact on how we in the ecumenical movement see ecumenism, and how we address global issues. I wish to highlight four of these trends:

1. While neo-liberal economic theory enhances opportunities for wealth-creation greater than any other time in our human history, it threatens to undermine the very diversity upon which unity is premised. Apart from the abhorrent poverty and deprivation in our world, environmental degradation, and the shameless amassing of wealth among a few, the frightening issue is that it attempts to homogenise diverse cultural societies, regardless of historical and cultural conditions. The message is this: if our way of conducting economic activities is right, then yours is wrong. Hence, we often hear mantras such as “globalisation is inevitable” from international financial institutions and powerful Western countries, or, “We will be left out if we do not join,” from some of our leaders of developing countries.

2. Second, as we become more and more interdependent, there is also an opposite trend happening: a reversal of what is familiar, both in terms of culture and religious beliefs. Hence, we have a situation



where nation states, particularly the developing countries, are caught between a future that lacks direction as a result of a decentralisation of power and the increasingly uncertain assurance of rule of law, on the one hand, and on the other hand a present that is unstable in terms of their sovereignty and identities as nations. For us in the ecumenical movement, this is particularly paralysing if our confessional churches are intimately tied to our cultural and traditional structures and expectations. In such situations, the most alluring option for us is to revert back to older beliefs and, if you like, become legalistic in our interpretation and application of biblical and faith beliefs. In such a trend fundamentalism is usually not far behind.

3. Church and state relations have reconfigured themselves dramatically since the terrorist attacks in the USA. Fundamentalism of various forms is occupying the privileged position once held by the member churches of the ecumenical movement. A classic example was the content of preaching by TV evangelists after the US attacks. These were nothing less than advocating hatred of other religions – and very particularly Islam. Their prominence tipped the church-state relations in favour of fundamentalism. It is also worrying because this trend excludes other Christian denominations and positions fundamentalism as perhaps the legitimate moral voice justifying war and violent conflict, amassing wealth, the existence of poverty and inequality, and supporting racism and religious dominance. The response of some of us would be to either align ourselves with this configuration or take a step back and assess where we could make a significant impact. These are not easy choices and, for some of us, it would be far easier to align ourselves with fundamentalism.

4. What is more relevant to the developing countries, is the prescription touted by financial institutions and powerful Western countries that free market democracy is the only way forward. This means that developing countries must adopt both approaches if they are to achieve the Western world's level of development. If the developing countries wish to participate in the free market economy, they must, at the same time, have the rawest form of democracy. The

fallacy of this prescription is that there is an inherent tension between the free market model and democracy which economists and political scientists know about. In many developing countries this results in creation of tensions or conflict over identities and resources, concentration of wealth among a few, and the configuration of conflicts along ethnic lines.

Brothers and Sisters, those four trends directly challenge ecumenism in the 21st century. Now, let me make it very clear that we undermine diversity and differences at our own peril. Our failure to recognise that diversity is indeed a divine creation, leads us to view differences as hindrances to what we consider “genuine development.” Ever since biblical times – referring to the Babylonian, Egyptian and Roman experiments – our human history has been marred with attempts to do away with diversity at a great price to human life, cultures and the environment. We thought that the way to unity and prosperity was to impose one culture, one tradition and one belief system upon all other communities. In short, despite the gains and many advances, our human history is also sadly marked by brutality, oppression and reduction of differences to mere problems to be solved. The challenge, therefore, is to determine how we perceive and appreciate diversity and its necessity for unity.

So what are the implications to the future of ecumenism? The turn of the new century does not give the world a reason for hope that the relative peace we enjoyed for most of the last century will be sustained. We are also witnessing an upsurge of civil society action on issues of major concern, such as poverty, debt, climate change and injustices among groups, organisations (including the churches) and NGOs. In fact, one of the major developments in the second half of the 20th century was the emergence of the NGO world. I suggest this is a sign of our times. The lesson that is most visible in these civil society actions is not their unity but their ability to handle their diversity that gives them the foundation to work for justice and peace around the world.

Implications

As indicated above, our ecumenical journey has taken place during a time of relative peace where nations of the world, through various compacts and international conventions, recognised and affirmed many of humanity's basic needs. The impetus for the drive then, as now, is the mandate of the Bible to work towards the unity of the Church.

However, the challenge of the ecumenical family in this new century is to work towards the legitimisation of diversity. This implies an enormous task and a paradigm shift. Our theological basis will need to be reviewed; our liturgical expression of faith may be reconfigured and our institutional expression may need to reflect this direction. This would help us to understand it as a biblical mandate that diversity and differences are divinely ordained and are presuppositions to unity, and not vice versa. To achieve unity we need to work for and sustain diversity. The ecumenical family should be a counterbalance to the idea that one God means one faith, one truth, one covenant – a spirit which sadly underpins much of what we are witnessing today.

The first eleven chapters of the Book of Genesis tell the story of a universal project of one language, one religion and one culture. This universal project ended with the Tower of Babel. My view of this passage is that God will choose a group of people to be different primarily to teach humanity the dignity of difference. Hence, biblical monotheism is not the idea that there is one God and therefore one truth, one faith, one way of life. In fact it is quite the opposite. It is the idea that unity creates diversity.

In his ministry Jesus constantly presented us with his desire that 'universal table fellowship' (a symbol of the Kingdom) would become a reality. He preached his message not only in words but also through his praxis. He sat down at the table and ate with all kinds of people. In all the Gospels Jesus goes beyond the limits of his culture, class and religion. He discovers that the divine mystery is working in the world in people beyond the limits of what particular human traditions have

decreed. He is open to women, children, lepers, Samaritans and Romans (all people his religious tradition despised) and lets a pagan Syro-Phoenician woman remind him that he must continue to open his heart to those of other traditions. Jesus did not tell the woman to be converted so as to benefit from his ministry of healing, but he affirmed her difference recognising her faith.

Today, we live in closer proximity to difference than ever before, hence we need to understand that,

- just as the natural environment depends on biodiversity,
- so does the human environment depend on cultural and religious diversity, and
- because no one creed has a monopoly on spiritual truth;
- no one civilisation encompasses all spiritual, ethical and artistic expressions of humanity.

The point here is that we cannot focus on “unity of the church” and neglect our diversity which is the very foundation upon which that unity depends. This insight is what the ecumenical movement must bring to the conversation on ecumenism and relations between the churches, about peace, security and alleviation of poverty in the wider world.

The context of this century is far different from that of the last, and that is why it requires decisive and conscious decisions on positions. This suggests a shift in understanding church and ecumenical relations and ways of doing things. For example, our human society of today demands of us in the ecumenical movement a decisive stand:

- for the dignity of the poor, the powerless and the weak in our society;
- for those who seek a meaningful expression of their faith;
- for the young and old who seek an affirmation of their faith or are searching for a new expression of it; and
- for the churches that are caught in a dilemma of uncertainty on how to express their confessional faith in a rapidly changing environment.



We need to pay more attention to diversity, discerning how it will shape the expressions and forms of our confessional faiths.

At this point I would like to propose a concept (one that we are very familiar with, but all too often have limited appreciation of its relevance), that would perhaps help to ground my point about diversity. It is the concept of covenant.

Covenant

I believe that the test of our ecumenical relations in this decade is recognising the image of God in others. We have come a long way in the last 100 or so years, to recognising the image of God in the confessional faiths of each other. The challenge here is threefold:

1. Can we recognise the image of God in those whose language, faith and ideals are different from ours?
2. Can we also recognise the image of God in the young and the old among us – and their quest for meaning (which in many instances is at odds with our articles of faith?)
3. Can we also recognise the image of God in the poor and marginalised members of our community?

I do not wish to pretend that grappling with these questions will not be painful. Yet we are hopeful that because God made a covenant with us, God will always be with us. So I briefly touch on this concept of “covenant” in the hope that it will inspire discussion and ideas on how we could shape ecumenism in the future. And so I explore two key points with regard to covenant.

1. Covenant sheds light on the future of ecumenism precisely because it affirms diversity and the dignity of difference. The great covenantal relationships between God and humankind, between man and women (marriage), between members of a community or citizens of a society – exist because both parties recognise that “it is not good for man to be alone.” God cannot redeem the world without human

participation; humanity cannot redeem the world without the recognition of the divine. Covenants exist because we are different and seek to preserve that difference, even as we come together to bring our various gifts to the common good. In other words, the very recognition that difference is a source of blessing leads us to seek mediation, conflict resolution, conciliation, peace and unity – a unity that is predicated on diversity, not on uniformity.

2. Covenants, because they are relational and not ontological, are inherently pluralistic. To illustrate my point, I have one kind of relationship with my parents, another with my marriage partner, my wife, another with my children, and yet another with my friends, neighbours, members of my faith community and fellow citizens. None of these are exclusive. Covenant tells me that my confessional faith is a form of relationship with God and that one relationship does not exclude the other. Nowhere is this more explicit than in the prophet Isaiah's vision of a time when the two great historical enemies of Israel – Egypt and Assyria – will one day become God's chosen people alongside Israel itself.

I believe that if we are to find an idea equal to the challenges of our times, it is this: that the one God, creator of diversity, commands us to honour his/her creation by respecting diversity. Some may view this as a fundamental departure from the premise which inspired the ecumenical movement, namely the prayer of Jesus in St. John's Gospel: "... that they all be one..." In some ways it is but, I believe, it is also fundamentally a part of Jesus' prayer and this is where the process of configuration may lead us.

Now, let us identify a number of

Issues for Consideration

In November 2003 in Lebanon, the WCC held a roundtable consultation on the reconfiguration of the ecumenical movement. In my remarks to the participants, I made the following points, will have



significant implications for ecumenism in the 21st century and which I will summarise here:

- a. The decline of membership among the North European churches and financial contributions from their governments;
- b. The changing of privilege positions vis-à-vis their governments, impacts on advocacy and works on common witness;
- c. The shift of the centre of gravity of Christianity from the North to the South vis-à-vis increasing numbers in the South and declining members in the North;
- d. The decline in ecumenical youth movements implies that we may lose this breeding ground for ecumenical leaders in the future;
- e. The yearning for spirituality among people – young and old – is a compelling trend. The issue for the ecumenical movement is whether we are capable of meeting their needs and whether or not our structures have become top-heavy;
- f. The tension between ecumenism as a movement and its institutional expression is on-going but what seems to be happening is that the latter is languishing and the former is doing well;
- g. The broadening of our ecumenical fellowship with the Evangelicals and Pentecostals, Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches has not yielded significant results, despite the amount of resources we dedicated to this;
- h. The tension between commitment to ecumenism and confessional structures is also a significant issue and may mean in the future that ecumenical institutions may no longer be sustained. But let me hasten to say that I hope that will not come to pass.

How shall we evaluate these concerns in light of what I proposed above as the new premise of the ecumenical movement? That is, shifting our focus and efforts towards recognising and legitimising diversity and the dignity of difference? While structural and institutional issues are important, I believe that new institutional expressions can only be constructed around the outcomes of the issues highlighted above. If

they are not, then I fear that we may put the cart before the horse and end up with an institutional expression that may be far removed and isolated from relational issues among churches and churches and society.

Conclusion

While I am concerned about the ecumenical movement's current status, I am hopeful. The reason for my hope is this. It is remarkable that the great religions of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, etc have survived after many centuries. Why have these great religions survived through all these years? My view is that the world's faiths embody truths that go beyond economics and politics, and they remain salient even when all else changes. We are reminded that religions survive

- not by their strength but by how they respond to the weak;
- not by their wealth but by the care they show for the poor;
- not by their power but by their concern for the powerless.

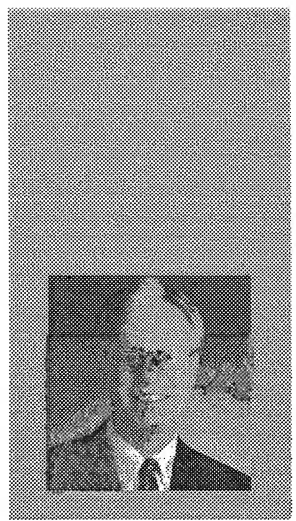
The ironic yet utterly humane lesson of history is that what renders a religion invulnerable is the compassion it shows to the vulnerable. This is also true of Christianity and we must rely on the lessons of history to guide us forward.

The future of the ecumenical movement and its well-being will be determined largely by how much we wish to legitimise diversity and how sincere is our conviction that the dignity of our diversity and differences is indeed a divine mandate. History has created for us a society from which we cannot escape, rather it is our responsibility as ecumenical leaders to build upon this inheritance and create a viable and vibrant movement of which we can all be proud. We need to recognize also that the future of the movement is dependent entirely on our ability and commitment to live and work together for our good, and through mutual respect and understanding, encourage dialogue and cooperation among our different communities.

May the blessings of the Almighty God, the Author of Diversity, be with you all. Thank you.



Seminar on Accreditation in Theological Education as held at the 2004 SPATS Council in Tonga



Introductory Note

The following text was delivered at the opening of the 2004 SPATS Council's seminar on accreditation. At the outset, I thanked the participants for their welcome and for their gracious response to my keynote address for the Council on the preceding day. I also noted that the genre for this presentation was different from the preceding day's address: as the seminar began, I invited interaction throughout the paper, and occasionally posed questions that led to discussion among the participants. The written text does not incorporate all of the notes from those interactions, but has been informed by them, and I am grateful for the participants' attention and rich contribution to the seminar that ensued. This text does follow the outline distributed before the oral presentation.

I. Enhancing Quality in Theological Education

The planning team for this 2004 SPATS Council has chosen a worthy theme, 'Enhancing Quality in Theological Education', not only for this seminar but arguably for the Association's work over the next five years. The key

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Earlier, Dr. Gilligan was Academic Dean and Professor of English at Pontifical College Josephinum, a Roman Catholic seminary in Columbus, Ohio; and for ten years worked in the schools of the Catholic Diocese of Columbus, as a teacher, academic dean, principal, and assistant superintendent. As a dean, he was active in the Higher Education Council of Columbus, promoting collaboration among the consortium's member-institutions and stronger ties with secondary education. He led institutional efforts of planning and evaluation, and implemented transitional programs for under-served constituents, a new first-year program, writing across the curriculum, and a college-wide protocol for assessment of outcomes. Michael Gilligan received the B.A. from Duke University, and M.A. and Ph.D. (in rhetoric and literature) from the University of Virginia. Today he serves on the boards of the Brooklyn Philharmonic, the General Theological Seminary of the Episcopal Church, A Christian Ministry in the National Parks, The Living Pulpit, and the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia.

practice of accreditation is not simply measuring the quality of an institution's programs, as is often thought, but enhancing the quality, fostering the improvement of a school's educational offerings, teaching, learning, resources, and administrative activities..

Accreditation of higher education now takes place all over the globe, but its distinctive practices originated in North America, the context with which I am most familiar and in which I have worked for more than 30 years. In North America, accreditation is notable because it is genuinely voluntary and non-governmental. While schools cherish their accredited status and use it as a public indicator of quality, each school makes a decision about whether to pursue accreditation. And, while the federal government in the USA recognizes and regulates accrediting agencies, these agencies' accrediting decisions are prized as independent of governmental authority: rather, accrediting serves as the measure of quality by the community of schools. A central value of accreditation, then, is mutual accountability among peer institutions, and the rigor of accreditation depends not on regulation from above but on the commitment among peers to the pursuit of excellence across their common enterprises.

In their pursuit of excellence, schools that form and sustain accrediting agencies must remind themselves that this work is highly contextualized: the standards of one association may inform another, but one association's standards can never be "bought" or implemented in wholesale fashion. Quality is related to both mission and context, and should not be defined as "essential" or "elitist."



II. Changing Paradigms of Accreditation

Over the past sixty years, as the accreditation of theological education has become more widespread, it's clear that the rules have changed! In some settings, accreditation has been seen as a stick, forcing movement, and in others, as a carrot, inviting movement. Is accreditation primarily a "watchdog" function, or does it serve as partner-in-improvement? As an association maintains a list of accredited institutions, does this primarily serve as a definition of who is acceptable, an insider, or does it primarily foster improvement of all institutions?

From the 1930s to the 1960s, in North American theological education, accreditation was generally practiced as an audit of essential resources. The decision of which schools could be – and could not be – members of the accredited association was rather easily determined: did a school meet base-line requirements (number of faculty members, suitably credentialed; number of students; adequacy of financial resources, library, physical plant, etc.)? In the 1960s, the accrediting questions changed somewhat: while the audit of required resources remained, the associations began to measure them in light of a school's stated mission, rather than a uniform standard for all. At the same time, the associations maintained a role of certifying the criteria for professional education, so that preparation for ministerial careers could be compared to preparation for other learned professions. In the past 15 years, these earlier criteria have been supplemented by a new concern. In addition to auditing an institution's resources according to its mission and the standards of professional preparation, the accrediting association now requires a school to demonstrate its effectiveness. This focus is often described as "outcomes assessment." While the school's mission remains the central component in the conduct of accreditation, the question has shifted from "what are the ingredients of a good theological education?" to "what are the results that the education achieves for the graduates and the communities that they serve?"

III. Case Study: A Report from the “Quality and Accreditation” Project of the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, 1992-1996.

At the outset, I noted that accreditation must be contextualized, and admitted that my experience in theological education has been primarily in the context of North America. In the 1990s, the North American association for theological education, the ATS, undertook its most comprehensive review of the accrediting standards since the association was formed in the 1930s. During that process, called Quality and Accreditation (Q and A) I was honored to serve on the ATS staff, and to work closely with the Associate Executive Director, Dr. Daniel O. Aleshire, and with the steering committee of the Q and A project, during the redevelopment, approval, and implementation of the accrediting standards. Although the following remarks will focus on this successful project in the ATS, I do not believe that the North American standards should serve as a norm, in any respect, for associations of theological schools in other regions of the world. I offer these remarks from our experience in North America as a “case study” that you may find interesting and useful in your consideration of ways to enhance the quality of theological education in your own contexts.

The ATS is a community of some 250 schools in the U.S. and Canada. These schools are diverse in many ways: some are located within universities, and others are free-standing; some are sponsored by a single Christian denomination, some are multi-denominational, some even non-denominational; and the two nations have somewhat different regulations on and understandings of university-level education. All of the schools, however, function at the post-baccalaureate level, and all offer the Master of Divinity degree. One hundred of the schools, or more, currently offer doctoral programs, most frequently the Doctor of Ministry, but also the Ph.D., Th.D., and Doctor of Missiology in more than 30 institutions. The Bachelor



of Divinity degree, once the standard in theological education, is no longer conferred by these schools. Although some schools include them in their curricula, the ATS does not accredit undergraduate, diploma or certificate programs. The ATS is governed by an elected executive committee. Its Commission on Accrediting operates as an independent entity within the association.

What was the genesis of the Quality and Accreditation project? After nearly 60 years with an evolving set of standards, why did the ATS decide to undertake such a thorough review of its work? The basic processes of self-study and peer review were still widely seen as effective, but the Commission on Accrediting and colleagues in many of the member schools recognized that there had been such profound changes that mere “tweaking” of the old standards was insufficient, if the standards were to be genuinely useful in fostering improvement. These changes could be seen in four ways:

Changes in membership: Originally, the ATS included only mainline Protestant seminaries and university-related divinity schools. By the 1990s, the membership numbered nearly 50 Roman Catholic institutions, and there were nearly equal numbers of mainline and evangelical Protestant schools; the accredited list included Unitarian, Pentecostal, and Orthodox schools, for which the original language of the accrediting standards often seemed an odd fit. The size of schools varied from enrollments of 30 to more than 3000. The governance of schools followed a variety of models, as did their understanding of the relationship of the theological school to the church.

Changes in demographics: Until the 1960s, the enrollment of ATS schools was primarily male, mostly students in their mid-20s, fresh from their undergraduate studies, and generally very much acculturated in the denominations that sponsored their ministerial preparation. By the 1990s, the average age of seminary students had shifted to the mid-to-late 30s; women students outnumbered men in some schools, and represented more than 30 percent of the ATS enrollment overall; many students came to seminary for second and



third careers, often bringing with them spouses and children. The enrollment of theological schools each year becomes more diverse by race and ethnicity, and the new students follow very different patterns of enrollment (some full-time, but many part-time; some residential, but many more commuting).

Changes in church-context: The context of graduates' ministries has become decidedly less uniform. Today, graduates serve as pastors of rural and urban churches, as always, but some in storefronts and others in mega-churches. Some of their sponsoring denominations still have considerable financial resources to invest in theological education, but others' resources are so diminished that schools must be financially independent. Many graduates of seminaries seek other roles of ministry than ordination – with an increase in well-trained lay ministers – and some pastors come to their roles by routes other than graduate education. With changing backgrounds of their students – some almost “unchurched” at the time of their enrollment – schools must offer not only information and professional development, but also programs of formation in the worship and spirituality of the students' tradition.

Changes in North American higher education: Like other graduate schools, seminaries and divinity schools have been affected by changes in undergraduate education: decreasing emphasis on liberal arts and humanities, earlier specialization, increasing focus on professional preparation within the undergraduate curriculum. New forms of delivery have become standard: in addition to part-time enrollment, students are also able to pursue degree programs at extension sites, and by various forms of distance-learning, including internet-courses. In the past decade, while the enrollments have become more diverse and delivery models more varied, there has also been an increase in external scrutiny; the federal authorities in the U.S. now consider the ATS a “gate-keeper” for certain regulations, including the oversight of loans to students.

Amid these many changes, the members of the ATS in 1992



committed themselves to a zero-based redevelopment of the accrediting standards, with a structure to allow extensive participation of the member schools. The business of the association's biennial meetings in 1992, 1994, and 1996 was primarily devoted to this work, and between meetings, multiple drafts were circulated for consideration at individual schools' faculty meetings and regional gatherings. Throughout this process, a central question guided the inquiry: what is the good theological school? That question guided various task forces, which considered, for example, what is the character of teaching and learning in the good theological school? What is the nature of governance in the good theological school? What resources – library, personnel, finances, campus or facilities – are needed in the good theological school?

After four years of extensive consultation, the members of the ATS voted to approve new standards of accreditation in 1996. The redeveloped standards uphold values that have emerged over the association's history, and that are woven through the new standards like threads. The 1996 standards are intended to represent the fabric of good theological education, and thus to be seen as a whole, but it is possible to examine the repeated appearance of some threads throughout the text, and thus to discern six core values that the Quality and Accreditation project reasserted as constitutive of the Association's identity:

- A. The primary focus of accreditation is on mission, but ATS recognizes that institutional missions and contexts are diverse.
- B. Theological schools are defined as “communities of faith and learning,” even in an age when experiences of community, encounters with faith, and environments for learning are all shifting.
- C. Member schools agree to evaluate, and submit for peer review, all areas of their life and work, not just their degree programs or curricula.
- D. The ATS respects the schools' confessional commitments, requires that these commitments be formally articulated, and simultaneously holds freedom of inquiry as necessarily in all

scholarly settings.

- E. Effective theological schools collaborate with and serve the ecclesial and academic communities, both local and global, in which they are situated.
- F. Schools of the ATS seek to include women and members of racial and ethnic minority groups who have been historically under-represented in theological education.

IV. Some Key Issues

In the course of the Quality and Accreditation project, the ATS grappled with issues that are common in other regions, I am sure. While seeking to define common standards, the association encountered very strong differences of values among the member schools, particularly in relation to questions of gender, confessional commitments and academic freedom. In the North American context, one of the critical issues was explicating the value of inclusiveness – in enrollment, faculty composition, and governance. In the adopted standards, this matter of inclusiveness was embedded in the rubric of institutional integrity: an institution demonstrates its integrity by the consistency of its actions with the commitments that it expresses in its formally adopted statement of purpose, the agreements it assumes with accrediting and governmental agencies, the covenants it establishes with ecclesiastical bodies, and the ethical guidelines it follows in its dealings with students, employees and constituencies.

Like other leaders in higher education, the ATS developed through its Quality and Accreditation project a new understanding of evaluation, one that is more integrative and more evidence-based. In implementing the redeveloped accrediting standards, the member schools of the ATS have worked hard to build models of evaluation that originate in their mission-statements; that follow a disciplined cycle of goal-setting, information-gathering, and reflection; and that foster improvement in educational practices. The process of evaluation ought to follow a “feedback loop,” leading to re-examination of the institution’s mission,



among all of its stake-holders, in light of the evaluation's findings. Evaluation, then, is both on-going and cyclic, not just an occasional or isolated activity related to the renewal of accreditation.

Recognizing the changes in the wider environment, the member schools of the ATS have taken a new stance relative to the ownership of resources, encouraging schools to consider strategies of collaboration and sharing, at the same time assuring their students and faculty members "reliable access" to necessary resources. While acknowledging new models of delivery within the standards, the ATS schools have also underlined their understanding that theological education is most effective in a community context, and sought ways to ensure that regardless of delivery-method the benefits of communal inquiry are available to all students who prepare for ministerial vocations.

V. Conclusion: A Work in Progress

Throughout this presentation, I have considered the accrediting practices and experiences of a community of schools quite distinct and distant from the community of schools that you represent in this audience. In the discussion that follows – and in the work that you undertake in years to come – you will need to determine what, if anything, in these remarks is relevant to your own schools and their settings in Oceania. We have heard Dr. Fele Nokise's suggestion that schools in the Pacific always listen to models from other regions, and it remains important for this association of growing schools to develop its own values, its own standards, and its own distinctive practices in accreditation.

Some schools readily meet the minimum standard, and in the past have sometimes been allowed to opt out of the most rigorous forms of peer review. My experience in North America indicates that ALL schools can benefit from accreditation, as long as the model is focused on enhancing quality. Accreditation must always pay attention to the "floor" – that is, on minimum standards and basic requirements – but



should also focus on the “ceiling,” possible and desirable goals for institutional improvement. Among its member schools, an accrediting association can build and sustain a culture of aspiration, calling all to accountability, and inspiring all to excellence in the service of God’s people. If our goal is improvement, then the business of accreditation will always be a work in progress. I wish you continued success in your important, ongoing and generous efforts to enhance the quality of theological education in the beautiful region that is the context for your and your graduates’ ministries.



Kerygmatic Skills: Taxonomy of Educational Objective – Religious/Spiritual Domain

Introduction

This work proposes a fourth domain, the religious/spiritual domain, in addition to Bloom's three traditional domains: cognitive, interactive and psychomotor domains. This is a domain that suggests objectives, which recognizes the value of religion and the significance of faith and the development of believing in spiritual facts in the context of religious education. Before going any further, it is wise to outline the traditional set domains in the arena of general education.

Survey of the domains

Benjamin S. Bloom in his *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: Cognitive Domain*¹ outlined three main domains, namely, the cognitive, the affective and the psychomotor.

The cognitive domain comprises "those objectives which deal with the recall or recognition of knowledge and the development of intellectual abilities and skills."² This is the commonly used domain for test development from an objective viewpoint and where educational objectives are known to represent the behaviour of the

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learners concerned.

The affective domain comprises “those objectives which describe changes in interest, attitudes, and values, and the development of appreciations and adequate adjustment.” This domain focuses on feelings and emotions, and the way(s) it affects a particular audience on the purpose of learning. Having said that this domain dealt with emotions and senses, one could automatically rise to the point and conclude this domain is rather more subjective than the cognitive domain. Because of its subjective nature it is also rather difficult to identify those objectives in this area for test development. The central focus of this domain is upon the study of subjective “overt feelings” and “overt behavioural manifestations” which thus make the task more difficult but not impossible.

The last of the domain is the manipulative or the motor-skills area. To my knowledge, there is very little work done on this area of learning. However later development like pragmatic learning and technological developments could resemble this aspect of learning and could also have proved its effective and helpful as it provides educational objectives for testing in a more practical manner. This aspect of learning viewed as objectivity in nature, meaning that our observations of facts that are objectively independent from the learners themselves.

In Search for a Religious Domain

In the SPATS, workshop on teaching Skills, in Tonga on September 30-October 1, 2002, a report was made from the history staff of STC,³ that a religious/spiritual domain be introduced. Its emphasis is a call to a unified study the value of religious experiences.

Religious experience is a phenomenon that one cannot escape or deny.⁴ Neither, the religious experience is a mere cognitive process nor also a total emotional feeling that one can study through behaviours and actions. Similarly, religion is neither merely a skilful technological



achievement that may prove a point in a pragmatic way, nor also a mere speculation.⁵ I am more content with religion as defined by Friedrich Schleiermacher,

Religion is neither ethics nor morality, nor metaphysics, but a feeling and a 'sensitive and appreciative viewing' (*Anschauung*)...religion consist of a 'sense and taste of the infinite,' 'a feeling of the internal' and 'a feeling of absolute dependency.'⁶

Religion is the basic ecstatic innate yearnings for the fullness of life an individual holds against his/her Creator. An internal intuitive feeling that indicates a total reliance for life is upon an outside power.

Religious experience, from a taxonomical perspective begins with cognitive study of objective facts through to an observation of various sensual procedural development and personal pragmatic performances onto a more subjective intuitive reality in nature. It speaks of an accommodation of a reality into one's heart which in retrospect, transform one's total whole being; the cognitive, the moral, the active skills and the whole being. It is a search for an intuition in contrast to reason. That which defines by Spinoza as *Intuitio*,

It is primarily used by Spinoza in connection with "*scientia intuitiva*" or knowledge "of the third kind." Intuition of this sort is absolutely certain and infallible; in contrast to reason, it produces the highest peace of the mind and virtue of the mind. Also, as over against *ratio*, it yields an adequate knowledge of the essence of things, and thus enables us to know and love God, through which knowledge the greater part of our mind is rendered eternal.⁷

Objectively, this new suggested domain will attempt to explore for our use the eternal quality of human beings and their contribution to the task of knowledge development. Its quality enjoins the

absoluteness and infallible, peaceful and virtue of the intuition as knowledge. Religiously, it seeks to bind the human back race, as creatures to the origin of knowledge development, the Absolute Creator. Pryser also stated,

‘The heart of religion is the heart, not the mind or the head. Schleiermacher pointed to the following feelings as especially numinous: longing, yearning (*Sehncucht*), reverence, piety (*Ehrfurcht*), humbleness, meekness (*Demut*), gratefulness, thankfulness (*Dankbarkeit*), compassion, mercy (*Mitleid*), contrition, remorse (*Reue*), hankering, zeal, aspiration (*Verlangen*).’⁸

If religion focus on the heart and that the named mystical feelings are the essence of ones heart then there must be a power within the heart of one’s life that produce such special feelings. The power of the heart is vital that it determines the degree of intuitiveness and supernatural elements that an individual has before his Creator. Perhaps at this stage, this strength inclines an individual to long for a *bind back* or *bind together* with one’s Creator. (religion) The seed of knowledge and knowing is the point of contact between the creature and his Creator. It is also the point of contact between an instructor and a learner.

Based on the above, Spinoza and Schleiermacher meet at the point that the essence of religion is the form of intuitive feelings and intuitive feelings are essentially the heart of religion. In search of a more effective learning on religious studies, there has to be guidelines and objectives that lead our learning towards proper knowledge of this very vital aspect of human life.

When we come to an age where religion has become a vital concern of the whole humanity, we must look at the fifth angle of our existence for help. The whole world is like a canoe that is wreaking its way through the storm. The storm of terrorism has taken religion as its carrier and that God only knows what tomorrow holds for us.



We may, at this stage, be obliged to think of what Carl Jung proposed for the world in the last century. Jung's observation on the attitudes of the people of the world arrived at two kinds of people, "extroverted (outward-looking)" and "introverted (inward-looking)." Further, he distinguished "four functions of the mind – thinking, feeling, sensation and intuition⁹ – one or more of which is predominate in any given person."¹⁰

In addition to Jung, I wish to consider in a later work that another function of the mind is imagination, which has become very common today in the uses of computer. Computer uses have dealt greatly with images. Perhaps such devices were originated or assimilated to the works of the human minds.

This new domain is an attempt to look at the intuitive introverted quality of life and its contribution to our world today.

Intuition is another way of looking at things, that which is the straight and instant apprehension by a knowing subject of oneself. It is an immediate subjective understanding of a phenomenon without conscious reasoning of the human self and of others in the world around him. Further, it is the consciousness of the universe, of the values and its coherent truths in relation to its origination.

Such consciousness may be a reception of an intervention from without (Revelation), or an intuitive awakening from within the collective unconscious apartment in the mind of the individual. (Remember) The former may be the cause of religion and the latter may be the cause of culture. 'Revelation' and 'Remember' work hand in hand to develop a person unto its manhood. They both contribute to the welfare of an individual and motivate ones perception of life.

Looking at things as they are, with full awareness that things did not come into being by accident or otherwise, nor also a thought came to ones mind by a miracle but given. Either, it is derived from above

the self, or it was from the immediate surroundings. Thus, this aspect of intuition renders the fact that everything one sees in mind does not at all grew out of its own but was receiving from somewhere through somehow.

Organizational principle

Bloom asserted that a principle whereby a taxonomy is developed be “educational – logical-psychological in nature. The emphasis of taxonomy can be read on the above sequence, giving the first priority of consideration to the educational aspect. It is educational in the sense that it is, to a certain degree, understandable by the human mind. It is also logical in the sense that such taxonomical objectives can be well explained and comprehended by the human mind. It is psychological in the sense that such development deals with the human minds.

The religious domain is based on facts about life that could well explain to a certain degree as other domain. It is also logical in the sense that there is a well-defined logic of development in this domain rather than being purely logic. It could classify in a special kind of logic, based on its guiding principle – intuition. Studying of intuitive elements of life teaches both teachers and students as both learners about life. No one could claim to be superior in life, the teacher or the students. On studying realities of life using this religious domain and its taxonomical objective, all are learners, journeying towards a specific goal in life.

Let us turn to look at the outlined taxonomy and its assumed contribution to the world of learning.

RELIGIOUS DOMAIN: KERYGMATIC SKILLS

1. Memorization – internalization process
2. Fact observation – that which is and exist
3. Faith-Defining – known versus unknown phenomenon
4. Analysis – categorization



5. Interpretation – inwardness
6. Evaluation – value judgment
7. Conviction – testimony
8. Proclamation – kerygma

The Educational Objectives.

1. **Memorization** – internalization process

Individuals internalizes realities from around them in life through various ways. Most particularly, from the family where they grow up, a father advises his son or a mother to her daughter. There is also an aspect of internalized quality inborn within a child as he/she grows up.

Generally I observe that white-coloured people of the earth learn things by critical observation and it turns out they lead the world and do things in life intellectually. The black people are learning things through an affectionate and down-to-earth ways and it turn out they lead the world and do things in life more culturally and socially. The coffee coloured people of the earth are doing things in a skilfully pragmatic manner and it turns out that they lead the world in doing things manifested skilfully.

Children are born to such category of life and experience the above-mentioned aspects of learning development. They internalize factual realities; known and unknown from the environment surround them since birth. The environment demonstrates realities that are of humane and living principles. Living principles are the foundation of various possibilities in life – the possibilities of knowing and sharing from each other. This may simulate to what Carl Jung labeled as “collective unconscious” which he believed to have present in every ones’ life.

I personally call this apartment in the mind of an individual as the memory. All people on earth have a memory and mostly, do dwell on this very vital part of the mind. Images that have encapsulated by the juvenile minds of the babyhood period are somehow, restored in



this apartment of the mind. Free association of those captured memories will be demonstrated later in life in the course of the individual's religious life. This is the aspect of mind development that created the world its own. Paul W. Pryser in his *A Dynamic of Religion* stated that

Phenomenologists are fond of saying that through perception man becomes related to the world and that both parties to the perceptual act are active participants. The world "opens up" or "gives itself" to the perceiver; the perceiver "takes what he sees and hears and touches for such and such" and thereby makes the world *his* world.¹¹

All are perceivers in life and that all are also having the capacity that Pryser stated above "makes the world his world."

The growing child sees, smells, tastes and touches things in life but does not understand it fully. The seen, smelled, tasted and touched things are perceived by senses and the mind and most probably to the memory. The facts of the perceived reality are somehow recorded as perceptions in the memory of the individual. These realities represent the intellectual/knowledge base of the person, where in due course these realities are later forwarded to the consciousness and will appear as facts of life.

The Bible says that an individual lives longevity of 70 years in life. "The days of our life are seventy years, or perhaps eighty, if we are strong; even then their span is only toil and trouble; they soon gone, and we fly away." (Ps 90:10)

There are ten seventy years in the whole life of an individual. The first seven years is depicted here as the period of internalization of realities into one's consciousness and memory. The first seven years may be called the periods of babyhood. This work claims the fact that later repeatedly seven years are the repetition of the first seven years in an individual. Pryser also stated, "The soul, asking for real bread, is



given the stones of perception from which it gets digestion.”¹²

The juvenile memory receives the vague facts of things seen and kept for a later reference. Generally claimed the first seven years of life experiences of an individual takes the above reality of stone and bread relation. The first seven years also dictates the rest of his life, his attitudes, behaviours and abilities in life. Except otherwise there is an external intervention on a life of an individual, there would be no change to the behaviours and all.

A careful study of this initial environment and facts that gave an individual the intellectual/knowledge base is vital for further development and or rectifications of any misbehaviour.

2. Fact observation – that which exists

The second seven years is the period of childhood - a period of factual study and observation, ensuring the existence of one's being against others in life. Facts absorbed in “collective consciousness” on the previous seven years are then deeply related for confirmation to the environment. Be it a human or otherwise environment, the facts about life is formulated in the mind and heart of the individual. The individual's consciousness is related to the recorded memory and thereby concludes to name them as facts of life. The individual is acquainted to obvious facts about life.

From babyhood to the second seven years of life (childhood) an individual is taken to a church temple and christianized. Until the baby reaches his second seven years, he identifies that church temple as a big house of worship where he was baptized. Perhaps the most vivid example of this development is the ability to speak and name an object coupled with the individual's existence relative to that big temple and to his/her fellow citizen. To a Tongan, it is at this point in life the individual is attracted not only to a ‘collective individuals’ but also to the ‘collective consciousness’ which, to human development the peer group. The inborn phenomena and the outside world co-operate to build up one's mind and strength of growth to boyhood. At Sunday

school, the individuals are given the opportunity to relate their lives to Jesus as they grow to adulthood in wisdom and might.

The last to note at this point is the ability of the individual at the end of his second seven years to recognize the significance of Jesus to the whole human race and God the Father of all. Such searching for identification and relatedness to the transcendent give rise to the avenue of believing in the supernatural without seen

3. Faith Defining – known versus unknown phenomenon

Faith is knowledge of and believing in God. Faith then is an intuitive awareness of God's presence and trustworthiness. We often think of our children going to church Sunday school at childhood. We ponder on the fact whether or not their minds absorb anything. But then, when we observe further in the course of their lives, good fruits are born and undoubtedly, the seeds were actually sown at an earlier stage. The epistle to the Hebrew says, "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." (Heb 11:1) We cannot see the God we worship, but in faithful worshipping we see intuitively. From such knowledge we may be able to categorize there is known and unknown phenomenon.

4. Analysis – categorization

In our search for the meaning of a given text, analysis and categorizing the given facts is virtually important. A sound mind can be able to depict the described categories of knowledge. The knowledge of faith is an affirmation of self-confidence upon what had been perceived within one's intuitive. The intuitive of faith is the essence of religion. In other words, intuition is the text of the context. On the attempt to differentiate such development on an individual mind, the process is quite hard especially when religion is a transformed culture and turns out, in the end that culture is transformed to Christianity (as with the case in Tonga and other Pacific islands). Intuition seems to remain unchanged, however, the mode of accepting the new standard is hard and controversial at most stage. Nevertheless, the focus of an individual must be on the intuition, the inwardness of one's individual.



4. Interpretation – inwardness

Interpretation is the incorporation of our own thoughts, life and culture into the meaning of a fact of life, led by our own bias. The encapsulated meaning of a text needs interpretation. What is written and what is read is not always picked up when it is read. This is due to the problem that is created by either the writer or the reader. It is either the writer's writing is ambiguous or the reader's preoccupations are too wide. The meaning of a text hides behind the words. Words carry with them factual and non-factual meanings. Words can also be allegorical and figurative in usage. The reader must get behind the words with a proper taxonomy in order to reap an appropriate meaning for a particular research. Through such taxonomy, the reader may predict some unknown truth from the known and draw inferences from the given text. The reader can draw analogies and comparisons, and a conclusion may derive based on the given facts. This part of the taxonomy calls for a cognitive process where logic may render to deepen the quest for the hidden meaning of a given text. After weighing all assumptions and facts, the drawn conclusion is, assumed as the most appropriate meaning of a given text. The meaning of a given text should essentially comprise the core of the kerygma (message).

5. Evaluation – value judgment

The cognitive domain has an evaluation objective and it calls for the "effective investigation of the efficacy of an action." The appraisal in the religious/spiritual domain calls for an ecstatic awareness of the innate reality enjoined in the message within the heart of the learner or individual is materially manifested and could be well read on behaviour, moral life, activities, performances and total movement, in words, deeds and whole life.

6. Conviction – testimony

When the heart is touched by the message, which thus, the salvation through Christ or the enlightenment by Buddha, that person can no longer cease but speak up. The heart welcomes such ecstatic experience to enslave and nurture, and then offer to another. The message finds quilt and offends the heart of the recipient. The heart was empty but

then it is full and wealthy. The heart was unworthy but then it is worthy and confident for a purpose in life. The feeling of emptiness is replenished; the feeling of unworthiness is being stricken to its depth, and yet the special yearning for life is its outmost circumstances is experienced.

7. Proclamation – kerygma

The message and the messenger are united and that they cannot separate one from the other, they are one in union. Manifested, the message had made flesh and encapsulated in a personal total life. The message has recreated a new person and that new person's activity in life is to proclaim the enlivened message. The content of the message is being hidden within the messenger's total being. Despite the fact that the content of the message is hidden it can still be read by all.

This point of manifestation may simulate to that “final Omega” of Teilhard de Chardin, or that final point of mind penetration of the Hindu Upanishads, as well as the Christian Perfection of John Wesley.¹³ John Wesley describes this stage as a “climax” which call for love as, “‘the sum of the perfect law [and] the true circumcision of the heart.’ It is training all of one's affections upon the Will of God, having “the mind in us which was also in Jesus Christ.”¹⁴ Last but no mean the least; we may also consider for this aspect the Augustine's claim in his *City of God* on true peace, “... the only real peace, ... the perfectly ordered and harmonious communion of those who find their joy in God and in one another in God.”¹⁵

The message, messenger and the proclamation are all in one in material, essentially objective and yet subjective in nature. The immaterial have become materialized and could be examined with educational objectives.

History of this development

The proposed domain is a fruit of a work that had been



experimented since 1992 on teaching History and Theology by the History Department in the Sia'atoutai Theological College.

Initially, the work based on the Greek philosopher and educationist Herodotus literary and factual method of learning. Herodotus originally learned to make use of ἱστορία – history, as the new method of scientific inquiry. This method consist first of,

- i. Asking a question.
- ii. Look for information relevant to the given question.
- iii. Draw a conclusion.

Herodotus began by addressing the question, “Why did the Persian Wars come about, and what deeds were accomplished on both sides that are worthy of being remembered.”¹⁶

Herodotus first introduced a critical and objective method in nature for our learning about realities of life.¹⁷ His inquiry method was adopted for teaching students on history and other related courses. Even on homiletical advices, this method was used. The central question in history that Herodotus used was the quest of “Why” rather than the question of “what”.

Further on, in search for more scientific critical methods for our teaching, we discovered from Dean Memering an objective critical method for Reading Research.¹⁸ Memering stated,

Reading is the foundation of Research...Researchers read for information;...Good researchers must be willing to go where the research takes them...As a skillful researcher, you must go below the surface of both style and message....Purpose controls reading: how you read, depends on why you read...There are four general reading purposes in research: reading for facts, reading for analysis, reading for interpretation, and reading for evaluation (critical reading).’’¹⁹

For the last three consecutive years, teaching of students in history courses and preaching was based on the stated methods of learning. It

was emphasized that learning is research and that if research is well done, then both the teachers and the students will be well informed of the realities they are searching for and preparing to share with students in class or the audience in a sermon are basically factual. Research in this sense is defined as a systematic investigation of facts to answer a question. The reader must have a question in mind and that in searching for the answer, reading has to be done systematically, hence Memering's method was greatly valued.

Another aspect of Memering's claims speaks loudly to us (teachers/researchers) as a good education can only be achieved by a prolific research reader. The benefits of this development will also reap in due course, as we will produce in our local schools some more researchers for the future. Memering's methods have proved effective on research writings and on preaching activities.

It is envisioned that our teaching must be geared towards an in-depth quality of education. Through Memering's method, it is sure that if one honestly follows its procedures step by step, it is to some depth of knowledge that he/she is led to.

Based on Benjamin S. Bloom's work *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* and the outlined domains of the cognitive, interactive and psychomotor, this work wishes to put on stage the fourth domain. This religious domain provides for us an inquiry, which is objective-subjective in nature. A search that may encompass our teaching in religious education on a more religiously oriented domain, using kerygmatic teaching objectives.

This claim take for granted that every religion has its own kerygma (message). This refers to its central core and imperative that prompts people to a particular task in life, be it of secular, spiritual or otherwise.

This new domain focuses at a point to relate the cognitive facts (realities) of the minds and the ecstatic and intuitive, the spontaneous and innate spiritual realities of the hearts. Thus, its institution claims an



objective-subjective nature. It adopts the scientific nature of the Cognitive Domain. Memorization and fact observation are its foundation. Facts of life are primarily internalized into the memory of the individual. This is the initial stage of education.

Further it moves along a similar ladder of the interactive domain where senses of the individual are involved in the learning processes. This is the aspect of the development where realities in life are enhanced into a more subjective level. It begins from the basic of knowledge – the internalization processes and fact observations towards a more spontaneous and manifested nature of objectives.

An incarnated message (kerygma) on a physical/material body would put into practice the innate realities of cognitive mind and an intuitive and overt feeling of an interactive domain. In so doing, in a more practical way, it serves the purpose of a psychomotor pragmatic objective.

As previously mentioned, the need for this new domain grew out of the attempt to relate the knowledge of the minds and the realities of the hearts. If changing of the heart and minds is the ultimate aim of our Christian kerygmatic mission, then there should be in a more skilful method, taxonomy of such kind be devised.

Alongside Bloom's domains, this new domain and testing procedures are slotted.

(Continued next page)

COGNITIVE SKILLS	INTERACTIVE SKILLS	AFFECTIVE SKILLS	KERYGMATIC SKILLS	TESTING PROCEDURES
Strategic planning	Report/Essay writings	Self-actualization	Proclamation	Kerigma
Theorizing	Embellishment	Adaptability	Conviction	Testimony
Analysis/Synthesis	Lucidity	Personal Worth	Evaluation	Worthiness/values
Principles formation	Logic	Control of reaction	Interpretation	Inside out
Schema formation	Accuracy of expression	Empathy	Analysis	Correspondingly
Concept definition	Paragraphing	Self-analysis	Faith defining	e.g. Apostolic Creed
Factual knowledge	Sentence construction	Emotional perception	Fact observation	Existence-fact & non-fact
		Values perception	Memorization	Birth to boyhood



The Kerygmatic Skills

Problem oriented

Ivan Williams began his workshop on cognitive skills at STC – 2002, by posing the question of a problem in making knowledge, abilities, attitudes that a student possesses before and or after a Certificate, Diploma, Bachelor degree is being taught. In digging deeper to the heart and the nature of the problem, one may find the proper platform towards better knowledge of ones students and their need as the beginning point for teaching. It also calls for formulation of objectives that one may, in a simultaneous way, guide the teacher and assumed to have been reached by the students at the end of the teaching works. The key factor and aim is to communicate the knowledge to the student

In a similar manner, this newly suggested skill is based upon a problem – the problem of sources interpretation and biblical hermeneutic. Both terms focus on the attempt to unfold the meaning of the written words in a given source or the Bible in search of the author's intention. The heart of this problem lies on this point, because one may not read deeply into a person's intention. The words one uses, are the only windows that a researcher may use to enter into the world of meanings that is encapsulated in a text. There is also a variation in meanings that may arise when the text is related to its context. Further, the relationship of the text to the author, and that of the text and the interpreter.

However, that does not mean that a meaning cannot be reached. Differences in meaning may either reflect the interpreter's or the author's intention. Different researchers will arrive at various meanings. Thus, the point to note is that search for the meaning is also problematic but not impossible. It is worth reminding, one cannot leave the boat and swim to the far shores, he must stick to the boat for a more promising landing. There is a way somewhere within the problem and the reader



that may serve as the starting point for such a problem oriented teaching skills.

Benjamin S. Bloom also states that, “Curriculum builders should find the taxonomy helps them to specify objectives so that it becomes easier to plan learning experiences and prepare evaluation devices. To return to the illustration of the use of the term “understanding” a teacher might use the taxonomy to decide which of several meanings he intended.”²⁰

Bloom’s contribution here is evident on the term “taxonomy” and “objectives.” We may as well, begin by examining our side, the side of the interpreter and the objectives he/she uses to reach the heart of a message and thereby solve the above stated problem.

If ‘text versus context’ were used now to prove a point, there is to some extent a call for the teacher to focus on the text as the nucleus for his concern. The text is the centre and the context is the background. In that way, the focal point is clearly depicted and that by looking at its face value, there is a need to create taxonomy to achieve its real meaning. Taxonomy can verify a specific objective(s) that one may use to read the hidden meaning of an interacted text-context situation.

Bloom also introduces that idea of a ‘phenomenon’ or ‘situation’ that allows the process of translating the situation to suit the taxonomy provided. The taxonomy should clarify both the intention of the teacher and that of the student. The taxonomy provides appropriate objectives that would carry the knowledge from the teacher to the student and that use for the testing of knowledge. If the key point is understanding, the objectives provided will enlighten both the mind of the teacher and the student and such enlightenment should be a way forward in the world of knowledge. It is also a situation, which unites both the teacher and the student as both learners.

The problem of meeting the author’s intention or the essential meaning of a text cited above calls for a new taxonomy to meet the



teaching in theological training. The main aim as stated by Bloom, is that the taxonomy helps the teachers to make a specified objective both for planning learning skills and for preparing testing devices. In search for a meaning of a text in the Bible understanding of the most appropriate meaning for a particular text is vital for the kerygmatic mission.

The problem of various underlining meanings in a particular text prevails also with the texts and or sources used in theological studies. In addition, if other discipline uses taxonomy to derive objectives that ease them on the process of teaching/learning and evaluation and there should be a different taxonomy for the study of the theology.

The taxonomy needed for theology will be an adoption of other fields, the cognitive, interactive and the psychomotor skills. All three skills have helped in many ways to conduct learning and education a way forward. This new religious/spiritual domain and the kerygmatic skills may, in a way help to take us further ahead in the field of educational objective learning.

Conclusion

Religious education is not for its own sake but it is for life; in other words, religious education should be life itself. Life is so full of given valuable goodness, and as we have life, a task is set before us to explore it to the fullest. Intuition is a given value in life and that studying it will enrich not only our mind but also our own understanding of life in this world. Religious education aims at an intuitive knowledge of our own existence, as creatures, in relation to our Creator.

Notes

¹ Benjamin S. Bloom, (ed.) *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: Book 1. Cognitive Domain*. (New York: Longman, 1984) p. 7.

² Ibid.

³ Sia'atoutai Theological College, a Methodist School at Nafualu, Kingdom of Tonga, established in 1948.

⁴ According to Eric S. Waterhouse, "Religion is a basic fact of human culture, inseparably connected with the history of human development."

Unpublished Lecture Notes on *The Philosophical Approach to Religion*.

⁵ This refers to Hobbes (1588-1679) and his 'origin of religion to credulity, ignorance, fear and superstition', and Hume (1711-76) the 'incessant hopes and fears which actuate the human minds', Kant (1724-1804) 'religion is based on morality', Hegel (1770-1831) religion as philosophy.

⁶ Paul W. Pryser, *A Dynamic of Religion*, (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1968.) p.140.

⁷ Dagobert D. Runes, (ed.) *Dictionary of Philosophy* (15th ed. rev.) New Jersey: Littlefield, Adams & Co. 1964) p.149.

⁸ Paul W. Pryser, 1968. p.140.

⁹ I am also inclined to include *imagination* as one of the functions of the mind of an individual as Carl Jung has produced. Jung proposed thinking, feeling, sensing and intuition but I want to propose this sequence, thinking, feeling, sensing, imagination, and intuition. This suggestion is based on the fact that imagination is the direct point of contact of the mind and this computer world.

¹⁰ *Britanica Encyclopedia*.

¹¹ Paul W. Pryser, *A Dynamic Psychology of Religion* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968) p.21.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Richard P.Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*, (Nashville:Abingdon Press, 1995), p48.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Forrest E. Baird and Walter Kaufmann, *Philosophic Classics from Plato to Nietzsche*, 2nd.ed.(New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc. 1997) p.340.

¹⁶ Britannica Encyclopedia, 8,*Herodotus*, pp.820-1.

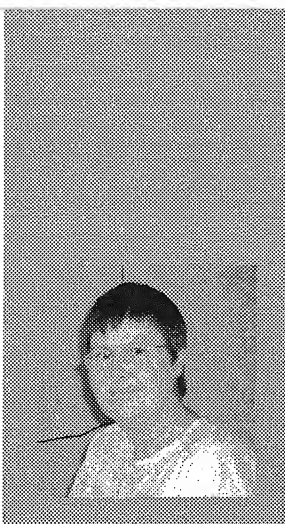
¹⁷ Compendious - *A synopsis or summary of an event, which is more or less a brief outline of major happenings in the past*. Herodotus was the man who, conscious of the **importance of recording the events** and the **motivation of the people** involved, took the first step of the long journey of documenting the

facts of history. In the wars between Greece and Persia, he described it by using the prescribed factors. Herodotus was eager to know **what the people did and why they did it**. He then, took some practical matters and the method of development for the study of the prescribed war. That is, -shipping in the Nile, -the huge cargo-coracles on the Euphrates, the feats of engineering which enable Xerxes to cut the canal through the promontory of Mt. Athos. The building of Egypt pyramids, the fantastic walls of Babylon, He also looked at the stories of the day, These may be call, raw facts from which Herodotus as the Father of History took to guide him in his attempt to study, what and why the people of Greece and Persia come to war. In the end, Herodotus was blamed for slanting his history to favour Athens at the expense of Sparta. His book was more poetic, and was made to read aloud to an audience but not to be studied in solitude. This way, Herodotus earned for himself the title, **Father of History**. Herodotus used a simple method, known by many historians as 'causal approach to events of the past', which simply means the emphasis is place on the cause of the war so that the effect may be more evident.

¹⁸ Dean Memering, *The Prentice Hall Guide to Research Writing*, 2nd. Ed., (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall-Inc., 1989).

¹⁹ Ibid. pp.61-2.

²⁰ Ibid. p.2.



Jenni Carter

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Dancing in the Waves: Moana Church Leadership in the 21st Century

As I have journeyed through life I have been moulded and influenced by many varied and distinctive social locations. I view traditional church leadership from a unique perspective. My dream for an alternative model is also distinctly mine. I have been part of many waves in multiple environments and experiences. At present I belong to Tikanga Pakeha in the Anglican Diocese of Christchurch.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century some distinctive elements suggest that old styles of leadership may no longer be applicable in our society. The four aspects that struck me are:

1. The tension between the local and the global.
2. The diversity of belief and expression.
3. The diversity of ethnicity, language, culture.
4. The speed and constancy of change.

This essay reflects on past and present leadership models in the church and floats a dream of waves as a new metaphor for leadership within the ocean of the dioceses. I recognise that any model or metaphor is limited to a social context and needs to be flexible and adaptable if it is to encompass the great diversity and uniqueness of our peoples. For me, the inherent danger of a model is



that it quickly transforms into a structure with systems that become rigid, losing the flexibility needed to cope with the ever changing environment.

I will address this topic in four sections.

1. Traditional dance: Inherited tradition.
2. Dancing with social and ethical change: Changes from 1960-2000.
3. Dancing with the rhythm of today: Finding God and leaders in the waves.
4. Letting everyone dance on the waves: A metaphor of leadership from within.

Traditional Dance: Inherited Tradition.

The Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia inherited its structure, both political and liturgical, from England. This hierarchical system, created by heterosexual men and dominated by their patriarchal norms, was transplanted by the immigrants in the early days of colonisation. Structure and authority were based on the old feudal systems of Western Europe of the 8th and 9th centuries where the King was considered superior, and more intelligent. Subjects were protected in exchange for loyalty, service and payment of rents. I believe this model is seriously flawed as a select few have undeserved privilege over the rest who are classified as second class citizens. It is about power, control and status.

During the 20th century some distinctly South Pacific characteristics emerged in the church.¹ The single hierarchical pyramid was dismantled to some extent allowing three diverse pyramids to emerge from the one. The distinctive three Tikanga church was formalised in 1992.² This was considered a positive and constructive way forward as the uniqueness of each Tikanga was valued without sacrificing the unity of the whole. But, the basic structure was not transformed. The leadership is still in the hands of a few. This leadership model draws a parallel with the dictionary definition of leadership as 'the position of a leader.'³

Or as 'administration, authority control, management, superintendency, superiority or supremacy.'⁴ A leader is 'a person who rules, guides or inspires others; head.'⁵ The New Zealand dictionary refers to leaders in farming terms, the leading dog, the front horse of a team.'⁶

Dancing with Social and Ethical Change: Changes from 1960-2000.

I thought growing up in rural New Zealand during the 60's and 70's was idyllic. Nothing changed. Everything seemed stable, solid, beautiful and static. We were fourth generation farmers, as was everyone around us. Everybody knew everyone by name and their cars. The mountains were as stable and unchanging as the community.

The radical economic reforms of the eighties sent farming communities into a tail spin. It was like a strong rip formed, sucking many families down to the depths of the ocean. Life would never be the same again in quiet rural New Zealand. New waves were forming, blown by the winds of technology, profitability, capitalism, individualism, privatisation and the share market. Change became the only constant for many people. Our isolated, stable environment became hyper-connected and mobile. Gone was sharing a "party line" with twelve other families. In were the private lines, internet connections and several phones (land line and mobiles). The world beamed into every part of life. Everyday activities were affected. The small local stores disappeared and the supermarkets took over. State equities were sold. Banks transformed their systems. Machines answered your calls. The ocean rolled favourably for a few but for most it was rough and cruel.

With the economic reforms came a new style of leadership, one that focused on the bottom line. Efficiency, profit, and cost-cutting were the 'in' words. The successful business leader was the one who produced / procured the most profit. People and their well-being became unimportant. If you lost your job with downsizing that was bad luck. Those who survived had to respond with increased productivity demands and longer hours. Stress and overwork became highly esteemed virtues/values. Our young people no longer train for,



or expect to be in, one job for life.

When I visited New Zealand in 1987⁷ I was struck by three things: First, the kitchen bench was full of new gadgets: microwave, food processor, bread maker, juicer, electric wok. The middle class now owned two of most things.⁸ Second, there was a noticeable decline in numbers in the farming communities.⁹ Third, there was a marked economic difference between city and rural communities; and the north and south islands.

When I returned again in 1991 I was shocked by two things: first, the speed of the people. Nobody relaxed. Everybody was in a hurry, almost running. Many people worked 60-hour-plus weeks. Stress and overwork were considered normal and good; second, the large numbers of people who were disheartened and/or depressed.

The framework and social ethos of New Zealand was being undermined and changed by the political and economic gurus who believed this would enable the country to survive in the global economy and free trade market. The impacts of this market driven economy were impinging harshly on the lives of ordinary working New Zealanders. The welfare system had almost been dismantled. 'User pays' was in. An attitude of individualism was taking hold. There was also a deep fear lurking below the surface of people. The gap between the haves and have-nots increased. Although these were enormous shifts with wide ranging effects the church was silent and slow to respond. People were remembering the good old days and asking 'Where have all the leaders gone, long time passing.'

In the mid 1990's the Diocese of Christchurch followed the business sector and called in consultants who recommended the restructuring of the institution.¹⁰ Executive officers were appointed and market plan strategies embraced. Parishes were renamed 'ministry units,' a name that smacks of profitability to me. (A farm's capacity and viability are determined and measured in units. How many stock units per hectare? Land produces so many units of grain or seed.) Money was an important factor in decision making. In rural congregations, falling

numbers and aging congregations on fixed incomes struggled to find the finance necessary to employ a leader. Some congregations closed. Some accepted part-time ministers. Others reinvented themselves forming what are now called 'Local Shared Ministry Units.'

Dancing with the Rhythm of Today: Finding God and Leaders in the Waves.

Management style leadership, with a focus on skill, productivity and success has driven the leadership dance. Emphasis is placed on the skill of the leader to engage and enable the followers, to dance to the rhythm of corporate business. Business management today focuses on the leader's abilities; the ability to get others to work hard to increase profitability. But this is only part of the picture. Many people are looking for a great leader, another Churchill, Gandhi, Mother Teresa, or Luther King. It is true that these leaders embodied the challenge being lived by their communities, made incredible contributions to their communities which in turn have impacted on the world, but that is only a small part of leadership. They could not have been great if their communities had not moved with them. I am not convinced that Oceania needs great leaders at this moment in time. Nor should we let management define leadership. I explore the reasons why, below.

The emergence of the three Tikanga recognised the major strands in the church community and gave space for waves of cultural diversity to dance to their own rhythm within the same ocean. Unfortunately this translated into the dance of the majority with minority groups being encouraged to join in if they could. Although we pride ourselves on being culturally sensitive and even inclusive, I believe the smaller waves within each Tikanga have struggled to dance in the waves. They need leaders from their own waves to release them to dance.

The Anglican Church as an institution has identified marginalised people and worked for justice. This was witnessed when the church protested against apartheid in South Africa, and the Vietnam War. Sexual discrimination was addressed by accepting women to the priesthood. The social-economic injustices created by government policies during



the 1980-90s motivated the church to join together in the Hikoi of Hope in 1998. The bishop of Christchurch stated in his report to synod that the Hikoi was 'a sign that hope is part of the faith of every Christian – and a sign that we are no longer willing to leave it to the economists and the treasury officials and politicians to define what our hopes are.'¹¹

The church continues to listen to the voices of those who are suffering and living with injustice. This is seen in the way the church continually brings to our awareness situations such as the plight of the Palestinians, Afghanis and Iraqis. It continues to value the Treaty of Waitangi as a living and relevant document.

Although our church and society have actively sought to change unjust situations, there are still people who face discrimination every day. We still marginalise people consciously and unconsciously. Part of leadership responsibility, in the 21st century, is to address these issues of discrimination and marginalisation. In the name of unity we may be in danger of not hearing the voices of the marginalised, those who are different, those we perceive as 'other.' We need to cultivate an attitude of compassionate listening and mutuality, and not just political correctness.

Aotearoa is not bicultural and neither is the Anglican Church. Tikanga Pakeha is multicultural. There are many waves. Waves of new migrants; be they Chinese, Korean, Afghani or Somali, waves of different gender, waves of different physical and mental abilities, waves of different values and visions. All are waves in the same ocean, swimming together, influencing and being influenced by each other.

Letting Everyone Dance in the Waves: a Metaphor of Leadership from Within.

As I reflected on leadership models past and present I was dismayed to discover how many metaphors/styles/models are foreign to Oceania and its people.¹² Living in a land full of mountains and rivers and surrounded by sea I began dreaming and painting a new metaphor which I call 'The dance of the waves, leaders from within.'

Mountains belong to the old inherited model because they are structurally immovable, rigid, unable to be transformed, and often frozen solid and deathly cold.

Waves are in continual motion and tension. Forming, growing, changing, surging, holding, running forward, submerging, rising up, reforming, causing ripples, transforming, creating, energizing, crashing, destroying, disappearing, reappearing, dissipating. I could go on. To me, waves embody leadership for the 21st century.

Dancing in the waves implies the ability to hold in tension the boundaries which are for ever changing and emerging. A wave is never static and leadership must ooze with grace as it moves within the wave. Because 'social processes are like rivers, flowing from within and shaping their own beds at the same time,'¹³ the art of leadership is to be part of the change dynamic which enables a group to face the challenges that threaten life as they know and experience it. Leadership is not about maintaining the status quo. It is a complex relationship between community and the social institutions/structures they create. Because relationship is complex I believe there is also a danger of oversimplifying leadership by defining it in terms of the abilities or characteristics of the leader.¹⁴ Leadership is a dynamic social process of interaction that creates and encourages change within a community who are pursuing mutual ends for their common good. Over-defining leadership roles lessens the community's ability to experiment with and experience life changing transformations which enrich their life and well-being.

I have come to understand leadership as a process that grows from within its own context. 'Leadership is a dance, in which leaders and followers jointly respond to the rhythm and call of a particular social context, within which leaders draw from deep wells of collective experience and energy, to engage followers around transforming visions of change and lead them in collective creation of compelling futures.'¹⁵

Leadership is not about being out front but about being transformed from within; within oneself and within the community. It is about brokenness, mending, integration, integrity and wholeness. It is



about movement, flexibility, tension, chaos, difference, conflict, unity, and common good. A leader can only exist within the social context of his/her followers. The relationship between the leader and the followers is ongoing, active and dynamic. 'Each takes cues from the other; each is affected by the other. Ultimately, if the tie is to endure, leaders and followers must work together to construct some kind of an institution or organization that embodies their common values.'¹⁶

I believe our church structure needs to be transformed. Transformation means changing formation. When gardening, if I disturb an ant nest, the ants move house. They build a new home in a new location, they transplant themselves but they are not transformed. If they grew wings and built a nest in the trees they would be transformed.¹⁷

As society struggles with changing values the church needs leadership that dances in such a way that every individual is encouraged to listen within themselves to discover the extra-ordinary well of life waiting to be released. Just as the waves are continually transforming the beach and the coastline, leadership is about continual transformation of oneself and others. Leadership is a process; a process which involves journeying to wholeness and integration of self. It is the process of change from within oneself and within the community which encourages each individual to discover the creative leadership they have within themselves. From wholeness and openness flow vision and the capacity to sit beside others and recognise that they are journeying with God too.

Leaders of the church in the twenty-first century must grapple with the riches and difficulties created by multiculturalism and the great diversity of humanity. Multiculturalism is not a one-way street. José Abraham de Jesús says, 'it means learning to understand and appreciate other peoples' cultures and to be able to function in an arena that may be unfamiliar',¹⁸ and uncomfortable. Embracing multiculturalism is not about teaching them to be more like us. It is more than reaching out to them, or inviting them to join us. It is about becoming part of their wave to such an extent that you flow with them on their journey of

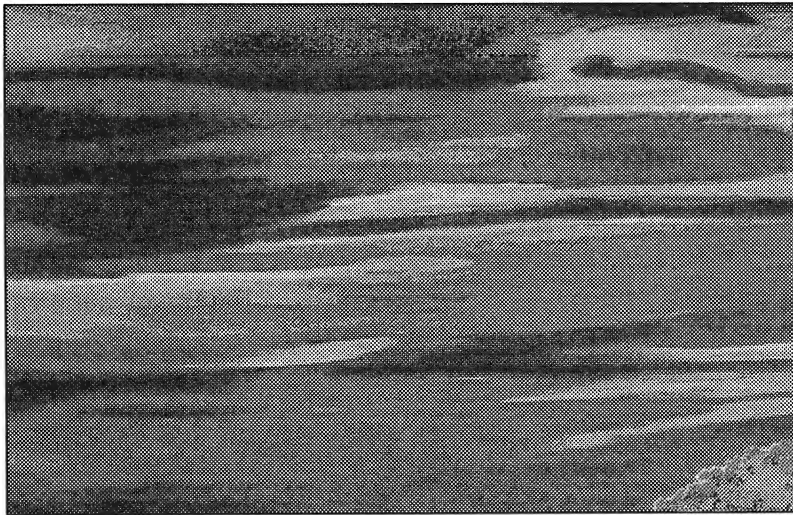
life, discovering and knowing their God. Being open, in heart and mind, to new ways of being. We have a history of colonial bigotry. In order not to repeat the mistakes of the past, distant and not so distant, we need leaders who are compassionate listeners. Ones who listen with passion to the voices in the waves. Ones who will sit with the tension, the conflicts and the chaos. Ones who know the God of the ocean. Ones who know the God of the waves. Ones who will ride with God's people in the waves. Because God is the God of the Ocean and all that is within it is hers.

God who separated the heavens from the earth also separated the waters from the dry land and set their boundaries. The waves within the ocean also have boundaries which are in constant state of change. For me a wave is like a body of water within a larger body of water. In a similar way the church is a body within the body of humanity. The groups within the church are like waves, bodies within the larger body the church. Each has its boundaries and all boundaries are in tension with each other and in a constant state of change. When I see birds floating and resting on the sea I marvel at how liquid can hold the bird afloat. But not only birds are held up in the ocean. Surfers, skiers, yachters and sailors all rely on the sea's strength and density to sustain them on top of the water. Fish and divers rely on its connectedness to swim within it. Plants and shellfish live under it. Whether on, in or under, the ocean sustains and nurtures life. The leader's role is to release the energy of a group to enable it to be responsible for sustaining and nurturing the life within it, and around it.

The ethics and morals of the people of Oceania are in a process of change. In order to live well in our multicultural and multi-gendered communities we need to understand who we are. What is my identity? What makes me, me? This involves a journey of discovery and a process of integration of self. As we get in touch with our inner selves and learn to transcend the fragmenting forces of modern society, I believe we will touch a deeper reality; a reality that, in my life, has been disconnected. By reconnecting and integrating the deeper emotions of my being, I will have a greater awareness of who I am. Knowing and accepting my identity will free me to access the passion generated at the



core of my being. It is at the core that I encounter my true self in God. It is where I take responsibility for who I am. It is where I grapple with living in this world of constant change. It is where I gain the understanding and energy to live fully in the wave as part of the ocean, leading and being lead by those in the wave, on the wave, under the wave, over the wave and around the wave. It is in the depth of my being I know that God is God of the waves and all are part of God. From the depths I will hear the call to serve in the waves.



Waves, the Dance of Leadership by Jenni Carter

Jenni Carter painted this painting before she wrote the essay. The essay was born out of the painting. The movement and change of the colours spoke to her about the tensions and dynamics in the waves which, for her, symbolized the dynamics of leadership.

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Notes

¹ For the purpose of this essay 'church' refers to the Anglican Church in New Zealand.

² "Proceedings of the Special Session of the Forty-Ninth General Synod, Te Hinota Whanui, Wellington, 15-18 November 1990; Proceedings of the Fiftieth General Synod, Te Hinota Whanui, Hamilton 10-15 May 1992," (Auckland: The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, 1992), 9. The Fiftieth General Synod ratified the revised constitution.

³ J M Sinclair, ed., *Collins Concise Dictionary*, 5 ed. (Glasgow: HarperCollins, 2001), 840.

⁴ Barbara Ann Kipfer, ed., *Roget's 21st Century Thesaurus in Dictionary Form: The Essential Reference for Home, School or Office* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1992), 504.

⁵ Sinclair, ed., *Collins Concise Dictionary*, 840.

⁶ H W Orsman, ed., *The Dictionary of New Zealand English: A Dictionary of New Zealandism on Historical Principles*. (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1997), 441.

⁷ I left New Zealand in 1983. I worked as a missionary in La Iglesia Anglicana de Chile from 1983 to 1996. Part of my contract was to return to New Zealand every three or four years to inform the New Zealand church of the work and to raise money to continue. This meant I would visit most of the dioceses in New Zealand. In 1991 I also visited Fiji in order to raise the awareness of mission.

⁸ In urban New Zealand consumerism had taken hold. Two and three TV's were common, as were two car families.

⁹ The removal of farm subsidies had altered farming. Uneconomic units had been sold or amalgamated with bigger units. Technological advances meant farmer labourers were no longer required.

¹⁰ Diocese of Christchurch The Anglican Church in Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia, ed., *Year Book of the Diocese of Christchurch*, 2000 (Christchurch: Diocese of Christchurch, 2000), 39-40. 'The Davidson Report and Review of Core Services,' was ratified at the One day Special Session of Synod, 4 March, 2000.

¹¹ Diocese of Christchurch The Anglican Church in Aotearoa New

Zealand and Polynesia, ed., Year Book of the Diocese of Christchurch, 1998 (Christchurch: Diocese of Christchurch, 1998), 32.

¹² For example, the bible uses the image of Shepherd, one who leads his flock, Ezekiel 34, John 10. But in New Zealand our shepherds drive their flocks, leave them alone in their paddocks, and have too many to call by name. The church has transplanted a metaphor which does not fit its new land.

¹³ Richard A Barker, *On the Nature of Leadership* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2002), 89.

¹⁴ This essay does not deal with this issue due to limited word count.

¹⁵ Peter Cammock, *The Dance of Leadership: The Call for Soul in 21st Century Leadership*, Second ed. (Auckland: PrenticeHall, 2003), 17.

¹⁶ Howard Gardner, *Leading Minds: An Anatomy of Leadership*, cited in Cammock, *The Dance of Leadership: The Call for Soul in 21st Century Leadership*, 18.

¹⁷ I may have read something similar about ants a long time ago, but I cannot remember the source.

¹⁸ José Abraham de Jesús, a contemporary theologian and writer. Source unknown.



Deconstructing Christ-Church Power Model: Enhancing the Dignity of Dalit Women in India

In India, casteism in bygone period was practised as a 'legitimate' means of establishing an orderly state and for the welfare of its people. Today, the fall out of this 'systematic' groundwork is the systemic superiority of the dominant caste people while driving the weak and the powerless oppressed caste to the margins of the society. Ironically, Christianity with its revolutionary claims for new humanity succumbed to the social pressures of the prevailing caste structure. The resulted discriminated group of Christians, the Dalit Christians face the threat of being harrowed in the current scenario of growing religious fundamentalism in India. Once the Dalits become Christians, they lose all the benefits allotted for the scheduled caste groups by the Indian Constitution. Furthermore, they are not fully welcomed in the church as "one in the Lord." They are forced to carry their stigma as the dalits or the 'outcastes' in the church as well as in the society. The recent mass movement among Indian Dalits to embrace Buddhism, in protest to Hinduism, is very notable for they have identified even Christianity as one among the "caste- religions."

The majority of dalits "live in sub-human social existence, abject poverty, economic exploitation, a sub-

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culture of submission and political powerlessness.²¹ They suffer psycho-economic pressures from the dominant castes and live in constant fear anticipating violence any time. To worsen the situation, in case of the dalit women, the unequal patriarchal power relations do more harm than anyone could expect. Teasing and sexually assaulting the dalit women by dominant caste men have become regular features of media coverage. Again, the experiences of rural and urban dalit women are different. Caste-based oppression is severe on the rural dalit women rather than on the educated urban dalit women, since they find space to interact with the dominant caste people in an urban setup.² In such a socio-political context, I have always wondered how Bible could be channeled to address the struggle of dalit women in India. Aware of the limitations of Bible in regard to the dalit women's aspirations, my struggle will be to challenge the traditional power structures being patronized through the Bible down the ages.

Familial Setup in relation to Dalit Women in India

The position of dalit women in family is subordinate like any other woman in India. But the tragedy is that the majority of the dalit women in India are thrice alienated and oppressed as inferior in class, caste and gender levels of social life and thus form "dalit among dalits". Just to gist out what the life of a dalit woman involves: she is under male domination both in family and society; even if they earn they need to subject to the other male members of the family; she has to face more inhuman sexual atrocities because of her caste inferiority; she is deprived of access to proper nutrition, health care and education; she has to protect and prove her "virginity" or "chastity" constantly; she is subjected to denial of land rights, civil liberties and decent living conditions; she has to experiment all the latest family planning methods against her own body and this list goes on. The most shocking fact about dalit women is that (except a minority of conscientised dalit women), they are more rigid in implementing all the senseless customs and traditions mainly because of their lack of education. They never



question the violence done to them by their husbands or other male members of the family. And they in fact think that the torture given by husbands is their inherent right, which cannot be violated. Therefore they remain as the constant sufferers of the unjust socio-familial system as the most exploited in the society.³

As far as Indian women are concerned, there are lots of expectations to fulfill of which, marriage as a social institution is- as experienced many a time- imposed upon women. An unmarried woman, in a traditional Indian society is a liability to the parents- no matter how high her achievements are- and an object of lust to the preying eyes around her. What Manu⁴ determined for Indian society keeps a spinster under the power play of her father- the first epitome of power in her life. Especially, after she attains puberty, the power play of the father becomes more severe as she now bears virginity. Until she surrenders her virginity to her husband, the father takes upon himself the custodianship of her virginity. And for the same reason, she feels vulnerable among the male folk of her society. She is never left with the freedom of choice of her husband, leave alone marriage! Even on the decision of pregnancy is her power curbed. All these struggles come to limelight in the wake of the call for individuality, freedom of choice of life and profession as human rights..

Expanding further...

In India, as elsewhere in many parts of South Asia, familial interests and familial dignity are mostly at the expense of individuality of women: in other words, women are non-individualistic. In such a context, marriage seems to be a contract of commodification of women where wife is the private property of her husband. The wife engages herself in household chores like cooking, cleaning, and bringing up children. Such an enterprising career, which would have otherwise fetched a large income in case of men, has left the women a non-economic entity with payless labour. If one had to attach economic value (as in the case of surrogate mothers!) to the ovum of the womb and the rich

nourishing milk of the breasts, we would be astonished to see how the selfless labour of women have been conveniently neglected in our patriarchal setup. Women are not able to sell their labour power in a labour market for their kind of labour would not fetch them a decent living on their own. Only if we evaluated the contribution made through them to the human power resources! Therefore, selflessness is a package that women are expected to be born and living with.

Violence done against women is expediently set aside as “a socialized sanction of the right which men arrogate to themselves over women which have caused further sexual constraints on women...”⁵ In Indian context, patriarchy controls sexuality, fertility and labour of women without having any respect for their bodily integrity. Because of sterilization of women, female infanticide and female foeticide, the female sex ratio had declined sharply “from a high of 1011 females per 1000 male children in 1951 to abysmal 923 in 2001”.⁶

Strange for us, a harsh reality among the dalit women though, caste plays an important role in assessing the current trend in female-male sex ratio (FMR). The drastic fall in the FMRs in the recent years owes a lot to the prevailing caste system. The FMR in 1961 was significantly higher among scheduled castes than the rest of the population. However, the period between 1961-91 witnessed a gory decline in the FMRs of the scheduled castes. Out of the 7million females who faced extinction between 1961-1991, 38% belonged to the scheduled castes which is a mind-boggling number compared to their percentage in the total population i.e., 16%.⁷ This alarming fall is due to the growing trend among schedule castes to follow the patterns of discriminatory sex determinations. The notion of women as liability, which was in fact foreign to dalit culture in the earlier times, has now gradually infiltrated into their very belief systems. In this connection, it should be noted that even the dowry system, which is so prominent among the dalits today was once unknown to them.

As regards sterilization, in a survey conducted by Minna Saavala among women in Andhra Pradesh state of India, it was found that the

reasons for choosing sterilization are concerned with the well-being of their existing children, their nourishment, clothing, education and, in the case of girls, their future dowry.⁸ Here, one should know that sterilization is forced upon the wives when they had given birth to at least one male child without much compulsion for a female child, though not vice versa.

“Doctors are advertising aggressively, “ Invest Rs. 500 now, Save Rs. 50,000 later” i.e., “ If you get rid of your daughter now, you will not have to spend money on dowry”. As girls under five years of age, women in India face neglect in terms of medical care and education, sexual abuse and physical. As adolescent and adult women in the reproductive age group, they face early marriage, early pregnancy, sexual violence, domestic violence, dowry-harassment, and torture in case of infertility. If they fail to produce a son they face desertion/witch-hunt. The end result is a high maternal mortality”⁹

It becomes evident that not every woman has equal rights and entitlements to food or health or any other kind of safety resources compared to their men counterparts. All these demonstrate the unequal gendered distribution of critical resources, an inequality that is weighed against women. “When gender is combined with caste (in the case of dalit women), then the question of entitlements and deprivation becomes part of a politics of distribution, a relational politics shaped and sustained by cultures of deprivation.”¹⁰ In fact, there are cultures of power and deprivation that function in every power oriented structures and systems, in which violence is executed to maintain the power and deprivation. Radhika Chopra suggests a dynamic need to redress the unequal access to resources. “This redressal is part of a politics that seeks to ‘enter’ households and rework inequality and gender imbalances through what has been termed gender intervention and gender sensitization.”¹¹ This is the point of departure for me to enter the Biblical realm to expand the scope of including dalit women in the household headship challenging the exclusive authority of men, and husbands in particular, within the familial set-up.

Deconstructing Traditional Biblical Interpretation of the Familial Power-Relationship

The wife-husband relationship, and woman-man relationship at large, is biblically presented on hierarchical norms. The scriptural base for such an interpretation is derived from the hierarchical model of God-Christ-Church relationship. 1 Cor. 11:3 and Eph. 5:23 form the foundational biblical bases for creating such a hierarchy. God is the head of Christ; Christ is the head of Church; in 1 Cor. 11:3, church is dichotomized into men and women. Strangely, Christ is projected as the head of men, and men- in turn- the head of women (cf. Eph. 5:23). Is it not illogical that Christ is the head only of men, when Christ is supposed to be heading an inclusive church! However, this strange and illogical comprehension had become the scriptural support to patronize an unequal power relation between women and men, which, in turn, has narrowed down to wife-husband relationship as well. Therefore, one should not be surprised to see this seeped into the worship and familial norms in relation to women.

The man-woman hierarchy seems to be originated from the second creation account where woman is created from man. Also, the apparent hierarchy of God-Christ-Church (man-woman), where each preceding member seems to exercise authority over the latter as 'head' or 'source' has led to andro-centric speculations. Some scholars like F.F.Bruce prefer to understand that the author "recognizes a divinely ordained hierarchy in the order of creation, and in this order the wife has a place next after her husband."¹² Consenting to such a thought is the one by William of Auxerre who advocates that man has a clearer intellect and the woman must be subject to him in accordance with the 'natural' order.¹³ Such comments call for strong suspicion as they reflect the male predisposed interpretation of the text. Passages like 1 Cor. 11:3 have been used by such interpreters as strong arguments for substantiating the hierarchical structure, for it presents Christ not as a liberator of women, but someone who fits into the order of hierarchy.¹⁴



P.K. Jewett identifies the above-mentioned Pauline statement as “the first expression of an uneasy conscience on the part of a Christian theologian who argues for the subordination of the female to the male”.¹⁵ The male-interpreted “submission” norm has evoked an inferior position of women and thus a superior attitude of men in a patriarchal society like in India. The very norm of “submission” has been the very reality of the existence of dalit women in India: *submission to the demands of the dominant caste people, submission to the patriarchal norms of their husbands, submission to the unjust and unequal socio-economic parameters, and this list goes on*. The Bible further legitimizes such oppressive norms of submission that have been projected as supreme virtues by the culture. The exhortation to women in Eph. 5:22ff indicates that nothing but only submission is expected of an ‘ideal’ wife.

Reconstructing a Functional Christ-Church Model

The attempt on my part, at this point, is to raise voice of protest against the traditional and hierarchical power relationship projected by the Christ- Church (man-woman) model. If this model projects a superior-inferior status, how can 1 Cor. 11:11 (*“In the Lord, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman”*) be interpreted? Is not a mutual dependence explicitly demanded here? However, the assigned roles of Christ and Church are to be identified in this model, which makes each component distinct with respective functional roles. This is true with man- woman relationship as well. But the difficulty is, how one will understand to appropriate the functional, inter-dependent relationship of Christ and Church. In Eph. 5:21, it reads, *“Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.”* How then in the following verses, subjection is limited only to wives? This entitles us with the liberty of reconstructing the traditional and hierarchical Christ- Church model, derived from these two passages.

The Christ - Church relationship, where Christ is the head and Church is the body, in Ephesians, is well supported by the earlier use

of this imagery in 1:22, 23 and 4:15, 16 (cf. also 2:16; 3:6). Eph. 4:15,16 and 5:30 deal with the role of church as body of the Christ, which calls for an individual functional role to play for the unity of the church. It is interesting to note that Christ's unity with his Church is called a "mystery" (v 32). Is this "mystery" a patriarchal disposition? Has this temperament safeguarded patriarchal norms? The depiction of Christ's love and self-giving for the Church (v 25) has already been echoed in 5:2. This love results in the Church's sanctification (1:4 - "*that we should be holy and blameless,*" and of 1:18 and 3:21), which in turn involves the glory in God's possession of his people and in the Church."¹⁶ How can the legitimized man- woman discriminatory power relationship be justified by such a noble purpose of sanctifying the church?

The specific roles of loving headship of Christ and voluntary submission of church are functional roles and they do not characterize an authoritarian relation where only one exerts uncontested power over the other. Schüssler Fiorenza emphatically affirms, "The patriarchal-societal code is theologically modified in the exhortation to the husband... Patriarchal domination is thus radically questioned with reference to the paradigmatic love relationship of Christ to the church."¹⁷ The love of Christ is supremely manifested in his sacrificial death, which reveals his willingness to submit himself to the will of God for the benefit of the church. Here, the sacrificial death of Christ brings benefit for the church, which otherwise could have been neglected due to the authoritarian formula. Rather, Jesus prioritizes his mission in his sacrificial death for making the church "holy and blameless". Here we are not witness to a selfish authoritarian Christ who takes pride in exercising the hegemonic power over the church. How can such an egalitarian image of Christ-church be used to support an unequal power distribution between husband-wife in a family? How justifiable is Paul using such an imagery to bring out the familial norms of wife as "being submissive" and that of husbands as "being loving"?

The Indian context from which I reconstruct this one-sided love and submission demands an altogether shift in such an age-old paradigm, which had in fact done more harm than good! What we need is a mutual



relationship, where the individuality of woman is not suppressed. A relationship in which the dignity of woman is not taken for granted. A relationship, in which man realizes his dependence on his wife (cf. 1 Cor. 11:11).

Very often, Christ-Church model is presented to a patriarchal set-up by the custodians of patriarchy as a hierarchical one, where the benefactors are the powerful. But the Bible never attributes Christ-Church model to an autocratic hegemony. What did Jesus do as the head of the church? Did he exercise tyrannical power over the seemingly powerless/inferior church? Certainly not. In fact, Jesus used his 'headship' over the church in order to make salvation accessible to everyone. He carried out his functional role as the savior promptly without having the least intention of dominating over the 'sinful world'. This affirms Christ's functional role in relation to the church.

Relating the Functional Christ-Church Model to the Ongoing Struggles of Dalit Women in India

First of all, the functional Christ-Church model persuades us to establish an egalitarian realm in which Dalit women will be able to cherish the dignity of womanhood by having rightful access to the resources like food, education, health, equal wages, safety etc. The love of Christ for the Church, which led to Christ's sacrificial death, challenges us to sacrifice our own safe zones of comfortable and luxurious ideologies to raise our voices for the voiceless.

Secondly, the religious ideology behind caste system permeates the image of body as of hierarchical, which perpetuates the origin of different castes from different parts of the body of Brahma, (the creator God of Hinduism) and the dalits are left out from this imagery. Hence, the very act of body discourse even in connection with church may sound oppressive to the dalits. On the other hand, the Christ-Church functional model emits glimpses of hope, where we find the inclusion

of all irrespective of their socio-cultural constraints and assures interdependence among one another. Such a critique of hierarchical body imagery could be extended to the wider inclusion of dalit women as well.

Thirdly, the dividing parameters like caste, gender and class need to be criticized thoroughly with the strong intervention and sensitization of the victims. This calls for powerful movements among the victims along with the whole Christian community. Castesim and patriarchy must be addressed as common enemies to the Indian church. By rejecting caste and patriarchal traditions and practices, the Indian church can become the advocates of dalit and feminist aspirations. If laying aside of the power by Christ was for the benefit of the Church, the community of believers needs to follow the same model in uniting to speak for the rights of the oppressed. This widens the horizon of the mission of the church, which Christ has initiated.

And finally, the beneficiary of the love and salvation of Christ, i.e. the church, has to extend the scope of the same benefit to all the people even beyond the religious impediments. As dalit concerns are further than Christian faith alone, defying religious fundamentalism is the greatest challenge of the Indian church, which has been the patron of caste, gender, and class discriminations. Against the backdrop of the clash for power by dominant castes and the struggle for identity by the oppressed, the church cannot be dispassionate anymore. The need of the hour is to wake up from its sinful slumber to work as supportive partners to stand along with the suffering dalit women.

Notes

¹ Rebati Ballav Tripathy, *Dalits: A Sub-human Society* (New Delhi: Ashish Publishing House, 1994), p. 207.

² S. T. Shirke, *A Study of the Status of Dalit Women*, in *Indian Woman*, edited by C. M. Agarwal (Delhi: Indian Distributors Publishers, 2001), p. 29.

³ See Ruth Manorama, *Dalit Women: Downtrodden Among the Downtrodden*, in



Dalit Solidarity, edited by Bhagwan Das and James Massey (Delhi: ISPCK, 1995), p. 162.

⁴ Manu is the author of Manu Smriti, considered to be the fundamental resource of socio-religious and ethical life in India. He says that a woman has to be under the control of father/husband/son at different stages of her life to save her from being called 'immoral'.

⁵ Colette Guillaumin, Racism, Sexism, Power and Ideology, (London, Routledge) 1995; p. 198

⁶ Vibhuti Patel, *Locating the Context of Declining Sex Ratio and New Reproductive Technologies*, in Vikalp, Alternatives (Mumbai, Vikas Adhyayan Kendra, 2003), p. 30

⁷ P.N. Mari Bhat, *On the trail of 'missing' Indian Females* in Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. XXXVII, No. 51, p. 5118.

⁸ See Minna Saavala, Fertility and Familial Power Relations, Procreation in South India, (Richmond, Curzon Press, 2001).

⁹ "As unborn children, women face covert violence in terms of sex-selection and overt violence in terms of female foeticide after the use of amniocentesis, chorion villai biopsy, sonography, ultrasound and imaging techniques. IVF (In Vitro Fertilization) clinics for assisted reproduction are approached by infertile couples to produce sons." V. Patel, p. 32

¹⁰ Radhika Chopra, *From Violence to Supportive Practice. Family, Gender and Masculinities*, in Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 7, p. 1650.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 1651.

¹² F.F. Bruce, The Epistle to the Ephesians (London: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1961), p. 114.

¹³ William of Auxerre quoted by Elisabeth Gossmann, *The Construction of Women's Difference in the Christian Theological Tradition*, in Concilium, 6 (1996), p. 51

¹⁴ Wanda Deifelt, *Can Christology be Freed from Patriarchy?* in Feminist Theology: Perspectives and Praxis, edited by Prasanna Kumari (Chennai: Gurukul Summer Institute, 1999), p. 232

¹⁵ Paul King Jewett quoted by Letha Scanzoni and Nancy Hardesty, All We're Meant to be: A Biblical Approach to Women's Liberation, (Texas, Word Books, 1975), p. 28

BUILDING A HOUSE OF WRITING



A Booklet on Writing Skills

Prepared by Andrew Thornley & Tilisi Bryce
on behalf of the
South Pacific Association of Theological Schools (SPATS)

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The Woman that Overcame Violence

This is the story of a woman that overcame violence. This does not mean that violence is now non-existent wherever she happens to be present. Violence is cunning; it finds shortcuts and secret alleys to prepare its next assault. As Cuban songwriter Pablo Milanes says:

*"Life is worthless
whenever we forget
that the killer came up with another way
to drop the next bomb."*

This woman I am talking about is aware of the worth of life. The first child of an independent woman that paid a high price for her freedom, the woman of this story learned from childhood that life, beauty, liberty and laughter must be snatched out of the claws of mistreatment and abuse. This is the case at least in the part of the world where she comes from.

If the problem of violence could only be explained in terms of a few bad guys going around abusing women! Then it would be a matter of launching a well thought out evangelistic campaign to win such filthy souls and convert them so that their owners become



Dr. Alvin Gongora

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decent gentlemen. But the problem is that the society, culture and nation of the woman of our story are Christian. She was brought up fearing God, going to mass and later to an Evangelical church, paying her religious duties and staying out of troubles, which in her case meant shooing the boys away. This was not much of a problem for her in her adolescence. By the time she was fifteen she had already had enough of stepfathers molesting her and beating her strong willed mother. It seems that a strong personality in her mother's case was not a deterrent convincing enough to keep abusive men away. They managed to come and go so that the woman of our story ended up having two brothers and one younger sister. Their respective dads have not been tracked down up to now.

A Christian society that begets violent men forces even the most naïve of the onlookers to conclude that the problem of violence cannot lie exclusively in the hearts and wills of individuals. Years later our woman would learn that the dynamics of the human heart and the influences of structures and societal arrangements are so closely interconnected that the boundaries between the public and the private must be redrawn. It started to call her attention to the fact that in her country, the only people willing to wage a fierce battle to protect their privacy were top models, pop stars, actors and the like. "As long as common people were concerned"-she later told me- "they were not that much preoccupied. At the end, the bruises on women's faces and arms were right there for everybody to see."

The woman of this story became a university student. She got involved with a Christian student movement that gave her many opportunities to put into action her longings for justice. She worked as a volunteer in different projects in poor areas in her hometown. She started to discern the different connections between domestic violence, macho attitudes and an undeclared civil war that ravaged, and still ravages, her country. She became one with freedom fighters that dreamed of a better and just country. She met a man that inspired her because of the depth of his commitment and insights. They got



married. Pretty soon, the woman of our story, still in her early twenties saw herself nursing two little boys. She was now a mother. Fear gripped her as she saw the story of her own mother in front of her eyes.

If violence is not overcome by conversion of the heart alone, violence is not overcome either by the transformation of unjust structures alone. This lesson our woman started to struggle with from then on. Her political commitment and faithfulness to the gospel (and that of her husband) led her to such a level of concrete engagement with victims of violence that she and her husband had to take their little children and go out of their country. Living in a strange environment while trying to learn another language put her under heavy depression. The woman of our story managed to complete her graduate studies in Philosophy but being also a housewife led her to understand the dullness most women undergo in their daily lives.

At that time, Mexican novelist Laura Esquivel published her novel *Like Water to Chocolate*. It came as a shock to our woman. There was a Latin American feminist proclaiming the reconciliation of women with domestic chores. This does not mean that the woman of our story has ever avoided the burden of running a house. Quite the opposite. The woman whose story I am telling is the hardest person ever to be found in the Western hemisphere. She is the one that gets up early in the morning before everybody else and turns the lights off at night before going to bed when her husband and children are already snoring. She enjoys preparing meals to put on a table that draws scores of hungry people that otherwise would starve. Her house is always open to whomever is left out in the cold. What shocked our woman was to see that there was a leading voice announcing the good news of a feminine kitchen in a continent that sees 65 out of 100 of its inhabitants going from sunup to sundown with nothing to eat. To make things worse, such a dietary jubilee rested on the shoulders of the women of Latin America. Our woman could not endure another day in the uneventful and rather boring and beautiful host country that generously opened its doors for her and thus saved her life. She returned to her messy and by

now even more violent stomping grounds.

She took advantage of the prestige that came along with her being appointed a university lecturer and went around her country in order to know first hand the plight of the victims of violence. Her profile rose up a hundred notches as she spoke out for women, afrocolombians and indigenous peoples that were the direct victims of a male dominated armed conflict that devastates her country.

The local elite that rules our woman's country is a key actor in the development of a free trade agenda that a powerful country up north is putting in place in order to ensure its predominance over the region. Such an agenda demands that any form of social organization be discouraged so that big investors can have even wider elbow room to ensure multimillionaire profits. To complicate things even more, our woman's country produces and markets a prohibited drug that enjoys great popularity overseas. For this reason, many find it a good idea to engage in this illegal trade. But the production and distribution of such drugs provides the powerful nation up north and the local elites with enough reasons to wage a war against local residents under the excuse of a war against drug trafficking.

Our woman discovered such a procedure to be not true. Drug trafficking is not the major problem that pins her country down. The government of her country and the powerful nation up north are not interested in tackling that issue. Drug trafficking provides the justification the army needs to wipe out villages, prosecute peasants, imprison indigenous leaders and dismantle all forms of collective life. Our woman joined her voice to that of others that uncovered such ugly reality. Her colleagues started to be harassed, then some of them just disappeared and a few others were killed. Her husband's name was on a list containing the names of unwanted people that started to circulate in her campus a few minutes after a prominent professor was assassinated. Once again they left their country. Once again they returned. Her husband lowered his profile to protect their children. They moved to a wealthy

neighborhood in order to distract the secret police in a sort of a self imposed exile. Of course, they do not have the means to sustain a high standard of living, but at least they have avoided unlawful searches and arrests that are never conducted in such residential areas. Still, our woman did not stop advocating for the victims. Her leadership was publicly recognized when she was appointed to a three-member committee that leads the nationwide coalition of social organizations that work for peace and reconciliation in her country. Four years have passed since the commencement of such a coalition. Our woman has had to fight many battles at the same time. The costliest ones are those she wages within the social movement. Her being a woman is looked down upon by comrades that are supposed to uphold liberationist and revolutionary views. She has to work twice or thrice as much as her male colleagues do. She has to prove herself trustworthy all the time while her male counterparts' contribution is taken for granted.

Her life is in constant danger. Her daily movements are closely followed, her telephone line is tapped, her e-mail account is tampered with, and she is permanently reminded by friends and foes that her place as a woman is the sanctity of her house. Last Wednesday she showed up in the Senate. Criminal right wing warlords are being promised a good place back in society after years of conducting the most horrible massacres in her country. The government, whose head is one of the architects of the extremist right wing paramilitary scheme will not bring those criminals to justice. Instead, it forced the Parliament to let the warlords speak to the nation. Our woman was the only human rights activist to protest on behalf of the victims. Her photograph appeared on the last Thursday issue of *The New York Times* and she was seen on TV across her country being dragged by the police out of the Senate hall while the commander of the unit warned her: "Do not step out of your house. Next time we'll get you."

Yet, this is a woman that has overcome violence. The fearsome paramilitary recently issued death threats against her, but she will not flee out of her country as she did in the past. She would rather stay

casting her lot with that of the victims of violence, with the internally displaced people that come into the cities by the thousands thus thickening the belts of shanty towns that encircle the major urban centers. She would rather stay with the women that are victimized by their abusive partners, with children at risk, with those that are thrown out to the fringes because of their dissenting views and sexual orientations. She reminds me of Ursula Iguaran, the main character of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the best novel ever written in Colombia. Ursula Iguaran is a woman that lived 100 years. She kept the world together while the men around her would go out messing things up. When Ursula Iguaran died, the world collapsed.

The woman of this story, like any other woman from Latin America or the South Pacific islands holds the pieces together as she overcomes violence.



Women and the Church

This presentation unlike other papers is a reflection on the tension of gender between men and women in the church. The experience of gender, which undermines the role of men and women in the church, is a present reality. Since the introduction of the Christian faith in these islands, the fear of women as subordinates to men hardly gone. Today I wish to say without any reservation, times are changing. The paradigm shift is gaining momentum as women now are discovering the potentials in the role they play alongside their male counterpart. The Mothers' Union, the creation and coexistence of female Religious orders, are good examples of this paradigm shift in the Church of Melanesia. Women are now taking on an active role and their potential to perform alongside their male counterpart in a wider spectrum of the church is evident and gaining momentum. On the hindsight, we must not push to the periphery the experiences of women in the rural areas whose voices for unknown reasons are still to come to terms with the ills of a male dominant culture.

Let me as a way of introducing this presentation invite my husband Fr. Philemon to join me now to begin the process of the presentation. As I have said, this presentation is a reflection on the tension between men

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and women and two of us are living embodiments of gender role evolution.

What we shall be doing is to present the context of the tension in a form of a role-play between men and women to provide an experience that is familiar to all of us in Melanesia. To begin, let me quote from a female psychologist, Carol Gilligan. This is what she said:

*"To have a voice is to be human
to have something to say is to be
a person, but speaking depends on listening
and being heard, it is an intensely relational act"
By voice she means something like what people
mean when they speak of the Core of the Self,
And speaking and listening are a form pf Psychic
Breaking.'*

All people in the church disregard of their gender roles, God has given to each one of us men and women a voice to be a living witness to the Gospel. But the reality is, men for cultural reasons always suppress women's voice. Why?

Male Voice

Because culture made it to be that way. You were bought with a Bride price, a weaker sex under the protection of men, illiterate, and taboos of customs forbid you to stand in front of men, that's why. Besides, aren't you comfortable with your place in the home to care for children? What else do you want?

Female Voice

But who are you? Are you a Christian husband?

Male Voice

Of course I am. I am a Melanesian Christian husband.



Female voice

I don't understand what you mean by being a Melanesian Christian!

Male Voice

By Melanesian, I mean I have a culture which shapes my behaviour and way of life, it teaches me to be faithful to its values and norms and one of these norms is to see that women's place must always be at home not in the public arena with men.

Female Voice

But I still do not understand, the reason for claiming yourself a Christian. Wasn't it St. Paul a man with a strong Jewish cultural background who said, "neither Jew nor Gentile, male or female, free men or slave, we are all one in Christ?"

Male Voice

But some Malaitans too are claiming themselves Jews with ancestral lineage going back to Abraham.

Female Voice

It is obvious that, it seems to me that some of your arguments are excuses for cultural reasons, which to a certain extent cannot be substantiated. If you must be honest, is it true that women are vulnerable, weak and good-for-nothing in the community?

Male Voice

Well, that's a big question for a male dominant culture to answer. But of course not, women have their important place in the community. I mean, we must not generalize about men having control over women since in Melanesia we have the coexistence of the patrilineal and matrilineal cultures. For instance, Guadalcanal and Isabel societies and many others, women who have the power over land not men.

Female Voice

Are you saying that women have an important place in a Melanesian community?



Male Voice

Yes, I am.

Women and the Church is one way of saying, women are not outside of the Church. Women are human beings, created by God and they are members of Christ's body. The church, the body of Christ is incomplete, if they are only men. Nor can the church exist without women, since both must compliment each other in every way. The two, men and women need each other if the church is to be the true body of Christ.

I wish to say as a woman, that days for blaming Eve for eating the fruits in the Garden of Eden are over. It is over, because Christ through his incarnation, death and resurrection has reconciled both men and women to God. Men and women therefore are equal partners in the life of a Christian community.

The Church of Melanesia needs an open mind today, to celebrate the differences in men and women. A good soup is the one that is made up of vegetables and varieties of ingredients. In the same way, the different abilities, experiences, and understandings of men and women in the Church of Melanesia too, can bring about a holistic and active mission for the Church if men and women work in partnership with each other.

To make this possible, men and women must spend more time looking at their "Strengths". It is obvious that the accusations against women from the past continue still in the present. Many Christians spend too much time looking at the weaknesses of women, but fail to recognize the role the women are playing. The reality is, people have dwelt too much on the weaknesses of women, that sin against women is on the rise at every level of the society. Prostitution, teenage pregnancy, infanticide, and child abuse, all of these are results of direct attack on women as the weaker sex.

We "women" are not objects for manipulation. From a cultural



perspective, we're honoured for our participatory role in the community. You men organize the talk and share your wisdom to bring about feasting for the community, but without these hands, all your talks gather nothing. I say this not to attack your important place in the community, but to state a point, that there is a mutual cooperation, which for sure exists between us. These are strengths at our disposal that we must celebrate. The strengths of cooperation, the strengths to be friends to strangers, the strengths to initiate loving service to those within and outside the community, the strength to stand in solidarity in times of crisis, all these and many more are strengths men and women are collectively contributing towards the community.

It is along these lines of thinking, that the church must keep to the ideals of its mission. The church, which consists of men and women, are people called by Christ Jesus, to be his living witnesses and agents of the kingdom in the world. Yet, the practice to exclude women, telling them to keep silence for cultural reasons, is a denial of Christ's inclusive love.

At this junction, I wish to say, that Christians in Melanesia have reached a point in time in history, when they must recognize a new "Paradigm shift" (a new way of thinking) at a time when women, are initiators of so many good things happening right at our doorsteps. Some of these paradigm shifts had begun way back during the missionary era. It begun with the creation of the Mother's Union as it developed an identity for the women in Melanesia to participate in the mission of the church. Today, the organization is growing from strength to strength. New members are added on, and socio-economic issues, which had never been the concern of the organization, are becoming more and more a concern to be addressed.

The new paradigm shift does not stop here. In the 1980s some new phenomena had emerged in the religious orders. The founding of the Melanesian Sisterhood Community by a Melanesian woman. Today, the religious order has a great impact on the life of young women in the church. The healthy relationships between the religious orders are also growing and in every level in the spheres of the religious life, the brothers

and sisters have become a beacon of hope and living symbols of the gospels both on the local and regional scenes.

Further steps, outside the boundaries of the religious orders starting to take shape also in the 1980s. At Bishop Patteson Theological College, women's programme was introduced to train the wives of students who would be clergy in the future. In the late 1990s some dioceses saw it fit and took up the initiative to send women as full time students at BPTC in the Diploma programme for four years.

And standing in front of you, is a sole survivor among many Melanesian women, as a lecturer among my male colleagues at BPTC. Dare I say, these are records of what women are capable of achieving even?

In this new millennium, a greater understanding is yet to be developed to accommodate the new changes and challenges the church is facing today. Globalization is one of these major challenges. To put the term in perspective, globalization disregards, culture, ethnicity, the vulnerability of island state, resources and economic downturn. It has no respect to people's well being, since profit and consumerism is placed before people's interest. Solomon Islands women and children are not immune to these adverse effects of globalization. Each village is a global community. Caught up in this are women and children. The question for the church of Melanesia is, how long shall we keep our women aside, when the challenges today are affecting both men and women?

It is at this point that I raised the following questions for this conference to reflect on:

- ◆ What are the strengths of women that the church should encourage to enhance their contributions in the church?
- ◆ What are the negative customs that the church should suppress to allow full participation of women in the church?
- ◆ What should men do to help women participate fully in the



life of the church?

Christian brothers and sisters, ladies and gentlemen, thank you.

Notes

¹ Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, Cambridge, (M.A.) and London Harvard University Press, 1982, xvi.



Rev. Dr. Russel Daye

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Cheek Turning is Not Submission - Jesus' Ethic of Non-Violent Resistance

(Scripture Text: Luke 6:26-36)

The PJT Board regrets erroneously omitting half of this article as published in its Pacific Journal Issue 30 and is therefore publishing the full article in this Issue (32).

*A Sermon delivered at Pacific Regional Seminary
during a joint worship service with Pacific Theological
College.*

I have to offer a little apology in advance here. This sermon will be fairly serious for such a friendly and fraternal gathering. I'm sorry about that, but because the Luke passage came up in the lectionary this week, and because I'm looking out at a collection of women and men who will eventually disperse to have great impact upon communities all across Oceania, I cannot resist the temptation to confront a great misuse of Jesus' words. Before we get to this, however, let me tell a story to get us considering the issue tackled by the sermon: violence and how to respond to it.

For the first half of 2000 my wife, Fiona, and I traveled around South Africa researching that country's reconciliation process. During our travels, we interviewed many people who had been devastated by the violence



of the apartheid era in which blacks were so greatly oppressed and the white government's policies of racial exclusion pushed the country into near civil war. We heard many horrible stories. One of the most startling was about a black man who reached the breaking point. This man's name was Oliver. His next-door neighbour was an eighty-seven year old lady who had a son serving as a soldier with one of the anti-apartheid liberation armies. One day the security police came to search her house. Finding that the son was not there, they punished his elderly mother instead, beating her to death. The next morning, full of hot blood, Oliver went to a busy road where people of all races would be traveling to work. He gathered a crowd of blacks together and worked them to a fury with his story of what the white policemen had done. He decided to kill the first whites they encountered. Two white laborers came down the road on foot. They were stoned and set on fire. Oliver then turned himself in to the police. He did not want to hide from his actions. He was proud of them.

Any of us who have been seriously hurt by other people understand the taste for vengeance. The desire for payback can be powerful indeed, but, as social beings and as Christians, we know that it must be resisted. It does too much harm. And if we cannot see this for ourselves, the words of Jesus, found in both Luke 6 and Matthew 5 make it clear. I read from the former: "But I say to you that listen, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes your coat do not withhold even your shirt."

This has been called an ethic of non-resistance. It appears to be the response that Jesus would have us act out when others attack us. It is human nature to hate those who hate us, but Jesus would implant in us another nature: one that moves us to *do good* to haters. It is human nature to curse those who curse us, but Jesus would inspire in us another nature: one that sparks us to *bless* cursers. It is human nature to abuse those who abuse us, but Jesus would grow in us another nature: one that compels us to *pray* for abusers.

Where do we get this nature? Where do we get the *kindness* to return hate with goodness? Where do we get the *grace* to return curses with blessings? Where do we get the *love* to return abuse with prayer? The answer seems to be that we get it from Christ Jesus. We are called not only to worship him; we are called not only to love him: we are called to be like him. This is a corrective of one of the great mistakes that Christianity has fallen into: the Son of Man, the most human of all human beings, his greatest desire is not for us to worship him. It is for us to *imitate* him, to be like him, to walk in the places he walked, to do the things he did.

So we are to be like Jesus, to return hate with love. When someone curses you, you are to bless her. When someone strikes you, you are to stand up again and let him knock you down a second time. If you are a woman and your husband punches you on the right cheek, then let him strike you on the left. Take your punishment quietly. If there is a coup and rebels come to burn your house and rape your wife, then you kneel down and meekly pray as it happens. If you are a fisherman and foreign boats come to carry away all your fish, then you move aside.

Is this what this passage tells us? Is this what Luke 6 and its parallel in Matthew 5 teach us? No, it is not. To tell a battered woman to meekly accept her abuse is an abomination. I am sure that Christ groans with pain every time a priest, a *talatala*, or a judge bends his words to keep a victim trapped in her prison of violence.

Jesus did not teach an ethic of non-resistance, at least not for those faced with real abuse or oppression. Jesus taught an ethic of *resistance* – but *non-violent* resistance. This was what he was teaching when he told us to “turn the other cheek.” It is a great misfortune that in Christian tradition that phrase has come to mean the opposite of what Jesus intended.² Let me explain.

In Luke 6:29 we find these words of Jesus: “If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also.” Matthew 5:39 is even more



specific: “But if anyone strikes you on the *right* cheek, turn the other also.”³ Why the right cheek? The first thing we need to know is that the blow would come from the right hand of the attacker. In Jewish society at the time of Jesus the left hand was used only for unclean tasks and one person would not touch another with it. Now, if the blow was to come from the right hand and land on the right cheek, it would have to be a backhanded strike. This was the kind that would be used by a social superior (a master, a husband, a Roman) against a social inferior (a slave, a wife, a Jew). Its purpose was not to injure but to humiliate. A punch would not be used to humiliate a social inferior but to defend oneself, likely against someone of similar social status.

It is important to remember that Jesus’ audience was made up not of the people who would be doing the backhanding, such as slave-owners or Roman (or Jewish) authorities, but rather of the people who suffered regular humiliation. What then was Jesus saying when he counselled these victims to turn the other cheek? Try striking someone on the left cheek with the back of your right hand. It is impossible. Jesus was suggesting that the victims of a backhand offer the other cheek in a gesture that would rob the oppressor of the power to humiliate. Offering the left cheek would essentially say: “Try again! You have failed to humiliate me. I am a human being just like you.” The oppressor would have to choose between striking with a punch, which would acknowledge the receiver as a social equal, or just walking away stung by the act of defiance.

Following on the advice about cheek-turning, Jesus has something to say to members of his audience who have been humiliated in a different way. Most of the people who came to hear him would have been very poor, and many would have entered into debt to some kind of creditor. When a creditor became tired of waiting for repayment, he would summon the person who owed him money to a court of law and demand payment. The second half of Luke 6:29 speaks to this situation: “and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt.” (We’re not really talking about coats and shirts; that is not what people in Jesus’ society wore. They wore cloaks

and undergarments).

What does this have to do with debtor's courts and demands of repayment? A little background. The people of Palestine in Jesus' time lived in an economy that was exploitative in the extreme. Regular people were ground into devastating poverty and were paid so little for their labour that it was very difficult to get out. As they became more and more poor they would borrow money and lose even the little they had to lenders. Eventually the poorest and most broken would find themselves in court being sued for the only thing they had left: their one piece of clothing – their cloak or outer garment.

Jesus' advice to these people was this: "if you are sued for your cloak, then hand it over to the one who is suing you, but do not stop there. Take off your undergarment as well, and hand that over too." Yes, Jesus was telling them to take off their *underwear* and to walk out of court stark naked. By doing this, the person being sued would be saying: "look what you have done to me! You have reduced me to nakedness. That is how hard of heart you are." This would have been very shameful to the one who dragged the poor person into debtor's court (as well as for the court itself). It would have been a masterful protest against the economic oppression of that situation and society.

In Luke 6 and Matthew 5, then, Jesus is not teaching passivity; he is teaching tactics of *non-violent resistance* for people who are so oppressed that they are almost completely powerless. He is teaching a way to register strong protest, to unmask the inhumanity of the oppressor without being reduced to imitating his violence. Of course the most powerful of these tactics was employed by Jesus himself when he surrendered to the cross.

In South Africa, violence, racial hatred, oppression, and injustice of the most naked kind was a daily reality. Many people reacted the way Oliver did: they returned killing with killing, they fought fire with fire. It did not work. Others, often spurred by preachers calling out "turn the other cheek" or "the meek shall inherit the earth," took the



opposite path and did nothing, suffering in silence. That did not work either. Then there were those like Archbishop Desmond Tutu who took a middle path. They loved their enemies, not by yielding to them but by standing strong and calling out the humanity that was buried in them. They marched to the places of bloodshed and stood in the path of bullets. They rallied and danced in the tens of thousands at the funerals of the fallen. The TV cameras followed; the world woke up. They went on strike, refusing to labour in an economy that made war machines to be used against them. They went into exile and wandered the world, showing their wounds and asking for help. Help came. It took half a century, but the world community rose up and cried “no” and apartheid crumbled. A resurrection. A great resurrection, after so many crucifixions.

For a contextual sermon, this one has not said much about Oceania so far, at least not directly. Well, despite my frank words, I am aware that I am still very much a guest in this part of the world. So let me contextualise by asking questions. What are the crucifixions in your communities? Who are the women being violated and crushed by men? How can you offer non-violent resistance? What are the crucifixions in your societies? Who are being pushed to the margins by the advance of unjust power? Who gets poorer as the rich get richer? How can you offer non-violent resistance?

As I said earlier, Christ calls us first to imitate him, not only to worship him. You know where the crucifixions are in your communities and your societies. To imitate Christ would be to confront these injustices, not with passivity but with non-violent resistance. This requires the embodiment of one of Jesus’ strongest qualities, one that we do not talk about very often. I do not mean his faith. Neither do I mean his compassion – nor his grace. I mean his *courage*. Yes, his courage. The courage of Christ, the courage of the non-violent resister of evil must be even stronger than that of the warrior. For the non-violent resister does not strike back. He does not return blows with blows. She does not lift the sword to protect herself. The courage of Christ is the greatest courage we can embody for it is the only one that returns hate with



love. Even if a great price must be paid to do so.

Notes

¹ A sermon delivered at Pacific Regional Seminary, joint service with Pacific Theological College, 19/09/2003.

² At this point in the sermon a visual demonstration was offered to explain what Jesus was driving at when he taught his followers to “turn the other cheek.” In this printed version I change and extend the text somewhat to compensate for the lack of visual demonstration. Here I am following the work of the New Testament scholar, Walter Wink. See his *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992) pp. 175-9.

³ All biblical quotations from the NRSV. Italics mine.



Book Review

Crisis: The Collapse of the National Bank of Fiji

Roman Grynberg, Doug Munro and Michael White

(2002: USP Book Centre:Suva)

by Fr. Kevin Barr

Financial scandals are not new but the \$220m National Bank of Fiji (NBF) scandal in mid 1995 was “the largest known financial scandal in the history of Fiji and the Pacific Islands”

While government tried to cover up the extent of the scandal and refused to launch a commission of enquiry, it was the media which kept probing and ultimately revealed what had taken place. This gave rise to a public outcry. The collective cost and burden of the scandal to the taxpayers of Fiji was enormous – in fact, it was estimated to be over \$300m.

As Savenaca Siwatibau notes: “Such a large amount could of course have been used for social and economic services and infrastructure such as schools, health centres, hospitals, roads and social welfare. So there is no doubt that the abuse and waste of public resources consequent upon the destruction of the NBF has contributed to the cumulative deterioration in the quality of services which are evident all around us today.” To make good the financial shortfall, the government in essence raided the national provident fund.

Using information from public records, the authors (an economist, a historian and an accountant) chronicle the details of this unbelievable story and, in doing so, make a most valuable contribution to our deeper understanding of all forces behind the collapse of the National Bank of Fiji and the far-reaching effects of this collapse.

They show that the NBF crisis was avoidable, its effects severe and its outcome unsatisfactory

It is a serious indictment of the sorry state of governance and national financial management in the country and calls into question the Ministry of Finance, the Reserve Bank of Fiji, the Auditor General and the board of the NBF for what they did or failed to do. In these days when so much is said about the need for good governance this story provides invaluable testimony of what happens when good governance is faulty or completely absent.

The authors have done a great service to Fiji and the Pacific in writing this report.

The lessons to be learnt from the collapse of the National Bank of Fiji are many but those that stand out are the following:

- a) A high standard of corporate governance is absolutely essential if a bank is to succeed and the money lent to it by thousands of small depositors is not to be lost.
- b) High standards of expertise, integrity and honesty are expected and demanded of directors, management and staff.
- c) Legislation needs to be put in place whereby those responsible for such serious financial scandals can be held legally accountable.
- d) The role of the media is critical if similar scandals are to be uncovered and brought to public notice. Good investigative journalism is necessary and the media must not be muzzled by government – even under the guise of “national security”.





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The Pacific Journal of Theology is published twice yearly by the South Pacific Association of Theological Schools. It seeks to stimulate theological thinking and writing by Christians living in or familiar with the South Pacific, and to share these reflections with church and theological education communities, and with all who want to be challenged to reflect critically on their faith in changing times. Opinions and claims made by contributors to the Journal are solely those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect those of the Editorial Board or the South Pacific Association of Theological Schools.

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